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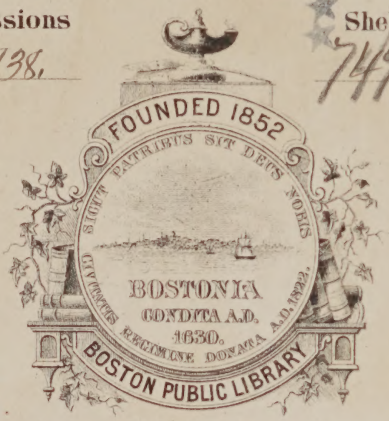

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LETTERS

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ADDRESSED TO

TRINITARIANS AND CALVINISTS,

OCCASIONED BY

DR. WOODS' LETTERS

TO UNITARIANS.

BY HENRY WARE, D. D.

Hollis Professor of Divinity in the University at Cambridge.

CAMBRIDGE :

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Channing

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W. S. SHAW,

Clerk of the District of Massachusetts.

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LETTERS

ADDRESSED

TO TRINITARIANS AND CALVINISTS.

LETTER I.

CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,

THE Letters of the Rev. Dr. WOODS to Unitarians, which have now been for some time before the public, suggest to me the propriety of addressing the few following pages on the same subjects, to Trinitarians and Calvinists. I feel the greater readiness to do it, and enter upon the task the more cheerfully, as the discussion of the interesting subjects, about which they are concerned, seems to be taking a character of moderation, temperance, and urbanity, which promises a favourable result. It assures us, that the great end, which, on each side, we propose to ourselves, will not be lost sight of in the ardour of debate, and the desire to maintain subordinate opinions, in which we differ from each other; and that we are not going to sacrifice the spirit of religion to any of its forms, or its dogmas.

I am far from thinking religious controversy to be universally an evil. It becomes so, only when it is improperly conducted. It is bad, and produces bad effects, only when the discussion of interesting questions of faith or duty is carried on with an intemperate

spirit, or with sophistry; and when the disputants, ranged on each side, manifest more of a spirit of party, than of the love of truth. So far indeed is the public discussion of those questions, about which Christians hold different opinions, from being a thing, that should be discouraged as hurtful; that we ought rather to rejoice in it, as an evidence of a prevailing interest in the subject of religion in general, as a symptom of religious life in the community, and as a means of preserving that life, of awakening a deeper interest, of turning the public attention still more to the subject, and thus furnishing opportunities for impressing upon the minds of men a sense, which they might otherwise not have, of its high value and importance. These desirable effects it may produce in a considerable degree, however imperfectly and defectively the controversy may be conducted, and although great faults of manner, and even of temper, may mingle themselves in the debate. But if there be a reasonable degree of exemption from bad passions, party views, the arts of controversy, and offensive personality; the effect of bringing the subject into view, in the various lights in which it may be presented, can hardly fail to be highly favourable to the cause of Christian truth.

The book, which has given occasion to the present pamphlet, and upon which some remarks will be made in the course of the discussions which follow, is entitled to more than common attention on several accounts. The subjects of which it treats are in themselves highly important; and being those, about which the Chris-

tian community is at the present time much divided, they have excited a peculiar interest of late by being brought more frequently than common before the public mind. It comes from a gentleman of acknowledged talents and learning, and of high standing among his brethren as a scholar and a theologian. It professes to speak with authority, as it speaks in the name of that part of the Christian community, for whom it claims the very honourable distinction of "the Orthodox of New England," and is designed to explain and defend the opinions, by which they are distinguished, for the purpose of guarding them against misapprehension, and in order to do away the effects of misrepresentation.

The writer of the following sheets hopes to perform the duty he has assigned himself, whatever may be its defects in other respects, in a spirit, which shall not be liable to exception. It is his design to make such remarks, as occur to him, on the opinions and reasonings of the pamphlet before him, and to give a free exposition of his own views upon the several subjects treated of by Dr. Woods, together with the reasoning by which he has been led into those views. But he wishes it to be understood, that they are his own views only. He is not authorized, nor does he profess, to speak in the name of any party or body of Christians. How far his opinions on the subjects in controversy, and his manner of explaining and defending them, may agree with those of his friends, he knows not. He is willing to avail himself of this opportunity of appear-

ing before the public on these subjects, believing that the cause of christian truth cannot fail of being promoted by unreserved freedom in the discussion of controverted doctrines; and by individuals communicating the result of their study and thought, without any reference to the opinions of the party or sect, to which they may be considered in general as belonging.

With respect to the points at issue between those, who are called Unitarians on the one hand, and Trinitarians and Calvinists on the other, it is of some importance that you should know in what light they are viewed, and what degree of importance is attached to them by Unitarians. Upon this subject, there is probably with us, as with you, some diversity of opinion; though I am persuaded that no intelligent Unitarian can think them unimportant, and practically a matter of indifference. It cannot be imagined, that the constitution of things is such, as to render truth and error on any subject perfectly indifferent, and equally salutary. And it is believed, as I shall have occasion to show in the sequel, that the doctrines for which we contend, and which are the subject of controversy between us, are calculated, as far as their effects are not prevented, nor counteracted by other causes, to have a better moral influence in forming the character, than the opposite doctrines; and that their reception and prevalence cannot fail to have great influence on the reception and spread of christianity in the world. At the same time, it is not maintained, that any one of the doctrines, about which we differ, is fundamental in

such a sense, that the opposite is incompatible with the Christian character, and forfeits the Christian name for him who maintains it. It is not doubted that all the best influences of Christian faith may be felt, and the Christian life acted out, and the consolations and hopes of the Gospel enjoyed by those, whose speculative opinions upon each of the several points of controversy, which lie between us, are in opposition to each other.

LETTER II.

I SHALL confine myself to a few passing remarks on what is contained in some of the first letters of Dr. Woods, wishing to draw your attention chiefly to the important articles of doctrine, which are discussed in the remaining ones; since, with the exception of the doctrine of the divine Unity, they involve the most interesting questions, that lie between us and you.

With respect to what is implied in no equivocal manner in the beginning of the second letter, I would only observe, that as to the propriety of *having* a creed, no doubt, I believe, has ever been entertained. Unitarians have always claimed the right of every individual to have his own particular creed. What they have sometimes had occasion to object to is, not that each of the several sects and denominations of Christians should have its own creed, nor, that any individual should have one; but that any, whether an

individual or a body of Christians, should insist upon their creed being the creed of others; either as a title to the Christian name, or as a condition of their being admitted to the participation of any Christian privileges.

In the concluding part of the same letter, and in the two following, Dr. Woods proceeds to charge Mr. Channing with a gross misrepresentation of the opinions of the Orthodox upon two points, the Unity of God, and his moral perfection; and of injustice in claiming these as distinguishing articles of the Unitarian Faith. Now, in respect to the first of these, the Unity of God, it is to be recollected, that the question is not, whether the Unity of God be *asserted* by Trinitarians. This is not denied them; but the true question is, whether opinions are or are not held by them in relation to this subject, which cannot be reconciled with the divine Unity. It is with this, and not with the other, that they are charged by Unitarians. Full credit is given to their word, when they declare their belief in the Unity of God, and when they tell us "it is asserted in all their systems of Divinity, and all their Confessions of Faith." Nor is there any thing that I can perceive in Mr. Channing's Sermon, that contradicts this. But until more than this is done, and until something more satisfactory, than has yet been said, can be alleged by them to show, that the commonly received doctrine of the Trinity is reconcileable with the proper Unity of God, we must be allowed to consider the charge as still lying in its full force.

Of this the most respectable Trinitarian writers seem not to be insensible. How much they are pressed with this difficulty, and how impossible they find it to extricate themselves from it, appears in the variety of explanations which have been successively resorted to, and the dissatisfaction expressed with every attempt that has been made for the purpose. The last expedient, indeed, that of rejecting the use of the phrase "three persons," as applied to the Deity, and substituting for it that of "three distinctions," if by distinctions be meant any thing short of separate persons or agents, may be considered as restoring the divine Unity. But it reduces the Trinity to a mere unmeaning name, and were it not an abuse of language of mischievous tendency, would leave nothing on the subject, that need be thought worth contending about.

Professor Stuart (p. 23) expresses regret that the term *person* had ever come into the symbols of the churches, sensible, as it appears, that it cannot be used in any intelligible meaning, without infringing on the Unity, and running into palpable Tritheism ; and the late President Dwight, though he contends for the propriety of the term, (vol. ii. p. 137,) as a *convenient* one for expressing the things intended by the doctrine, yet confesses, that if he is asked *what* it means, he must answer, I know not. But what is the particular convenience of the use of a term, which expresses no meaning, not even in the mind of him that uses it, we are left to conjecture.

Upon the other charge, which relates to the moral

perfections of God, the course which Dr. Woods has pursued seems to me liable to objection. In his fourth Letter, in stating what was necessary on his part, and the mode of reasoning proper to be pursued, in order to relieve the system he has undertaken to defend, from the charge of inconsistency with the moral perfections of God, he says, "we have nothing to do with the inquiry, whether the common doctrine of depravity can consist with the moral perfection of God, nor with any difficulty whatever in the attempt to reconcile them." This is certainly a very extraordinary thought, that in defending his system against an objection to which it is thought liable, he should have nothing to do with the very objection itself, nor with the difficulty it involves. Did the question relate to the simple fact, whether the doctrine of depravity, as maintained by the Orthodox, were a doctrine of scripture or not, its consistency or inconsistency with the moral perfections of God would indeed make no part of the ground, on which the argument should proceed. But the question he had to consider was a different one from this. The doctrine of depravity, together with the associated doctrines, has a place in the system of Orthodox faith. It is upon the ground of these doctrines, as Dr. Woods expressly admits, (p. 25,) that Mr. Channing has used the language, which he understands as implying the charge under consideration, viz. "that the Orthodox deny the moral perfection of God." Now it certainly does belong to him, who would relieve the system from that imputation, to show, not only that

the doctrine of depravity, but that all the other doctrines connected with it in the Calvinistic system, are consistent with the moral perfection of God. This is the very point at issue, and the only point, so far as relates to this charge, with which he had any concern; and all that he has said to show, that he maintains many views respecting the divine government and purposes in common with Unitarians, and which are consistent with the moral perfection of God, will do nothing toward proving that he does not maintain other opinions, which are not reconcileable with it. He was required, therefore, in undertaking to repel this charge, not only to prove, which I shall afterward show he has not done, that the scheme of doctrine, which he defends, is taught in the scriptures, but also to prove that it is in itself consistent with the moral perfection of God. But this he has not attempted to do. He has, on the contrary, said that, which implies, that whatever the fact may be, the consistency demanded cannot be seen to exist. Now if he, who believes the doctrines in question to be taught in the scriptures, is yet unable to perceive *how* they are reconcileable with the moral perfection of God; ought he to be greatly surprised, or much disturbed, that another, who cannot find them taught in the bible, and who sees them therefore only as human opinions, without authority, should represent them as irreconcileable with that moral perfection, which he does find there clearly and constantly taught?

There is another consideration also, not to be overlooked, to show that he had something to do with this inquiry. If the doctrine of depravity, as it is maintained by the Orthodox, cannot be perceived by us to be consistent with the moral perfection of God, the presumption is very strong, that it is not true ; since, if it actually be inconsistent, it certainly cannot be true. In proportion then to the difficulty of reconciling it, the proof of it from scripture and our experience ought to be clear, and not liable to objection. The neglect, therefore, to remove this fundamental objection to the whole system, you perceive, must have its influence upon all the reasoning employed in the direct proof of its several parts. Nothing but the most clear and satisfactory proof will be sufficient for the support of a doctrine, which labours under the weight of so much intrinsic incredibility, confessedly incapable of being removed.

I have one other remark to make in this place. Dr. Woods has stated correctly, (p. 26,) " That independently of revelation, and well known facts, we are incapable of judging, what the goodness of God will require, as to the condition of man ; or what man's character and state must be under the government of a being infinitely wise and benevolent." But the inference he would draw from this, I think you will perceive, is not warranted by the premises. For although it be conceded, that from the limitation of our faculties, we are incapable of saying what the goodness or justice of God would require ; we *have*

faculties capable of deciding with certainty, what they will *not admit*. We can pronounce without hesitation with respect to some things, that they are absolutely irreconcileable with those attributes. To say that we have not faculties for this, is to say, not that our knowledge is limited and imperfect, but that it is actually nothing. There may be a thousand cases, like those stated by Dr. Woods, which, previous to experience, we could not have foreseen, nor should have expected, which when first proposed present difficulties, but which are yet capable of being accounted for in a satisfactory manner, and reconciled with that justice and goodness, with which they seem at first to be at variance. But other cases, it is evident, may be supposed, which would admit of no such explanation. And what I contend is, that the orthodox doctrine, as to the natural "character of man, and the manner in which God designates the heirs of salvation" (p. 25) is of this kind; and that Dr. Woods' assertion (p. 27) "that the facts he has there stated, and which are known to all, are as far from being agreeable to what we should naturally imagine the infinite goodness of God would dictate, as the fact that men are subjects of moral depravity," cannot be supported. There is no such analogy between the cases, as to warrant the conclusion. For we can see, with respect to the former, how they *may* be consistent with the moral perfections of God; but we can make no supposition, upon which we shall be able to perceive, that the latter *can* be so. The reason is, that, with

respect to all the former cases, such as the promiscuous suffering and ruin brought upon men by plagues, hurricanes, and earthquakes,—the cruelties and horrors of the slave-trade,—and the darkness and ignorance to which so large a portion of the human race are by the inevitable circumstances of their condition subjected,—the evil is not final and remediless, but is partial or temporary, and may be considered as inflicted for the purpose of discipline; and the single consideration, that it makes a part of human probation, and that the subject of it may yet, by the manner in which he conducts under it, be an infinite gainer in the whole of his existence, relieves it from all objection arising from any supposed inconsistency with the justice or goodness of God. But the doctrine of the native depravity of man, taken in its connexion with the whole scheme of which it is a part; personal unconditional election, a complete atonement made for those, who are thus ordained to eternal life, and their regeneration by a special irresistible influence of the spirit of God; and what is the necessary and infallible consequence of all this, the equally unconditional reprobation and final and everlasting ruin of all the rest of the human race, certainly admits of no such reconciliation with any notion we can have of the moral perfection of the Author of our being.

As Dr. Woods, however, makes no attempt to show how they are capable of being reconciled; as he has virtually admitted that they are incapable of being perceived by us to be consistent with each other; and

has contented himself with endeavouring to prove the several doctrines as matters of fact, upon the principle, that if he can clearly prove them to be doctrines of scripture, he is not bound to show how they can be consistent with the divine perfections, it is unnecessary to say any thing more to show, that the imputation of which he complains is not removed. I shall therefore proceed directly to the consideration of the evidence upon which the several doctrines in question rest, as matters of fact.

LETTER III.

The discussion introduced by Dr. Woods in his fourth Letter, and pursued through the fifth and sixth, relates to "the natural character of man." As the question, "what is the natural character of man," lies at the very foundation of the controversy between Unitarians on the one hand, and Trinitarians and Calvinists on the other, it will prepare us for a fair discussion of it, to examine in the first place, what is the precise difference of opinion between them on the subject.

Heretofore, those who claimed the title of Orthodox, and professed to follow the doctrine of Calvin, were satisfied with the language used by the Westminster divines in the Catechism and Confession of Faith, in which the doctrines of that reformer are expressed with remarkable precision and distinctness. In them

the doctrine, which respects the natural state of man since the fall, and in consequence of that event, has two parts. They represent the first sin of our first parent, as *imputed* to all his posterity, who are said *to have sinned in him, and to have fallen with him;* and they teach the entire corruption of man's nature, *that he is utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil,—under the displeasure and curse of God, and liable to all punishments in this world and that which is to come.*

It seems that the first part of this account, though it was formerly reckoned one of the principal tests of Orthodoxy, more zealously maintained than any other, is now given up. It is wholly omitted in the Creed adopted by the Theological Institution in Andover. It is expressly given up by Dr. Woods. "The Orthodox in New England at the *present day*," he tells us, p. 44, "are not chargeable with the erroneous opinions held by their predecessors. The imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, in any sense, which those words naturally and properly convey, is a doctrine which we do not believe." This change in the opinions of the Orthodox, and advance toward what we believe to be right views, we are glad to witness; and have no doubt that the same correct mode of thinking and reasoning, which has led to it, will lead also to the rejection of the other part of the doctrine, which has heretofore been considered as inseparably connected with it. We think that further reflection will con-

vince them, that they *are* inseparably connected—that if the imputation of Adam's guilt is a solecism, and inconsistent with the moral character of God, it is equally so, that, in consequence of it, all his posterity should come into being with a nature so totally corrupt and inclined to sin, as to be incapable of any good.

I could have wished that Dr. Woods had given a more distinct and compact definition of the doctrine he meant to defend on this point, that there might be no mistake of the question between us. From scattered expressions, however, and from his having made no exception with respect to this part of the doctrine, I think we are to conclude, though he chooses to express it in somewhat softened and qualified language, that he holds it in its full extent. By such expressions as the following, (p. 31,) "by nature men are subjects of an innate moral depravity;".....“ while unrenewed, their moral affections and actions are wholly wrong." (p. 43,) "All without exception by nature, or in consequence of their natural birth are in such a state of moral impurity, as disqualifies them for the enjoyments of heaven, unless they are renewed by the Holy Spirit." And (p. 46) "Adam's transgression had such a relation to his posterity, that in consequence of it, they were constituted sinners, and subjected to death, and all other sufferings, as *penal evils;*" he means all that is meant by the following expressions in the Assembly's Catechism and Confession of Faith. "The corruption of his nature by which he is utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all that is spiritually good, and wholly

inclined to all evil, and that continually—and that men are thus by nature, as they are born, under the displeasure and curse of God; justly liable to all punishments in this world, and that which is to come."

I am fortified in this by recurring to the Creed of the Institution with which he is connected, in which I find the following passage. "That in consequence of his [Adam's] disobedience all his descendants were constituted sinners: that by nature every man is personally depraved, destitute of holiness, unlike and opposed to God, and that previously to the renewing agency of the Divine Spirit, all his moral actions are adverse to the character and glory of God; that being morally incapable of recovering the image of his Creator, which was lost in Adam, every man is justly exposed to eternal damnation."

The doctrine respecting the natural condition of man, which I shall now state, and endeavour to maintain in opposition to this, may be expressed in the following manner.

Man is by nature, by which is to be understood, as he is born into the world, as he comes from the hands of the Creator, innocent and pure; free from all moral corruption, as well as destitute of all positive holiness; and, until he has, by the exercise of his faculties, actually formed a character either good or bad, an object of the divine complacency and favour. The complacency and favour of the Creator are expressed in all the kind provisions that are made by the constitution of things for his improvement and hap-

piness. He is by nature no more inclined or disposed to vice than to virtue, and is equally capable, in the ordinary use of his faculties, and with the common assistance afforded him, of either. He derives from his ancestors a frail and mortal nature ; is made with appetites, which fit him for the condition of being in which God has placed him ; but in order for them to answer all the purposes intended, they are so strong, as to be very liable to abuse by excess. He has passions implanted in him, which are of great importance in the conduct of life, but which are equally capable of impelling him into a wrong or a right course. He has natural affections, all of them originally good, but liable by a wrong direction to be the occasion of error and sin. He has reason and conscience to direct the conduct of life, and enable him to choose aright, which reason may yet be neglected, or perverted, and conscience misguided. The whole of these together make up what constitutes his trial and probation. They make him an accountable being, a proper subject to be treated, according as he shall make a right or wrong choice, being equally capable of either, and as free to the one as to the other.

That this, and not the scheme of innate moral depravity, is the truth, I shall endeavour now to show by arguments drawn

1. From observation and experience, and
2. From the Scriptures.

It is my purpose, previous to entering on this discussion, to observe, what the Orthodox will not hesitate

to admit, that judging beforehand, the scheme of total moral depravity, or of any original bias to evil rather than good, is something different from what we should expect, and involves great difficulty in reconciling it with the moral perfections of God. This, as I have before observed, is implied (p. 29) by Dr. Woods himself. I admit, with him, that this is not a sufficient reason for rejecting it in opposition to the evidence of fact, and of scripture, and for the reason which he gives, viz. that we are finite, and cannot so comprehend the purposes and conduct of an infinite being, as to be certain, that what *seems* to us inconsistent with his moral character, is so in reality. But *it is* a good reason for yielding our assent with caution, not till we have examined with care, and not without very satisfactory evidence. It is a reason for suspending our assent, and reexamining, so as to be entirely satisfied as to the fact. I have another remark also to make. The doctrine, it is confessed, is repulsive. The mind naturally revolts at it. It *seems* at first, to all men, universally, to be inconsistent with the divine perfection. But the first impression is made upon us by the nature which God has given us; and I think we should be slow to believe that a nature, thus given to all, is intended to mislead and actually does mislead all, on so important a question. It is certainly an extraordinary fact, if a fact it is, that God should first give to man a corrupt nature, wholly averse to good and inclined to evil, and at the same time endow him with a moral discernment and feelings, which lead him instinctively to deny that God can

so have made him, because inconsistent with justice and goodness; that is, that he has given him a natural sense of right and wrong, which lead him to arraign the conduct of the Being who made him.

I proceed now to the inquiry, what observation and experience teach us, as to the fact of human depravity. And here we must not forget, that the question is, not whether there is a great deal of wickedness in the world, but what is the source of that wickedness; not whether mankind are very corrupt, but how they become so; whether it is a character born with them, or acquired; whether it is what God made them, or what they have made themselves. All that is said of the prevalence of wickedness in the world may be true, and yet none of it the effect of an original taint, which men brought into the world with them; none of it making a part of their original nature. I may acquiesce in the mournful and humbling representations given of the violence of human passions, the brutal excesses that follow the unrestrained indulgence of the appetites; the intemperance and self-indulgence of individuals; the wrongs, violation of the rights, and neglect of the duties of domestic life; the injustice, and fraud, and violence, prevalent in every form in all the transactions of social life; the pride, and selfishness, and regardlessness of the rights and feelings of others, appearing in a thousand forms; the wars which desolate the earth, the abuses of government, and the oppression and tyranny, that are exercised by some over the rest of their fellow-beings. All these representations may

be true, and no more than a just account of what actually takes place, and yet the whole be fairly accounted for, without any original and natural bias to sin. All may be but the effect of neglect to restrain appetites, in themselves useful and good, to control and give a proper direction to passions designed to be useful and capable of the very best effects, and in general a failure to exercise properly, in temptations and trials, the powers of direction and resistance, which were in themselves sufficient.

But, although this reply may be made, were the representation usually given of the human character, and of the prevalence of wickedness, correct in its fullest extent; I am satisfied that I am not called upon by truth to make that concession. I insist, that the account usually given of human wickedness is exaggerated. It is a partial account, and such as gives a very wrong impression. Men are not the mere brutes and fiends, which it would make them. There is much of good as well as of evil in the human character, and in the conduct of man. Indeed I hesitate not to say, that as much as there is of wickedness and vice, there is far more of virtue and goodness; as much as there is of ill-will, unkindness, injustice, and inhumanity, there is incomparably more of kindness, good disposition, pity, and charity. I insist, that if we take a fair and full view, we shall find that wickedness, far from being the prevailing part of the human character, makes but an inconsiderable part of it. That in by far the largest part of human beings, the just, and kind, and

benevolent dispositions prevail beyond measure over the opposite; and that even in the worst men good feelings and principles are predominant, and they probably perform in the course of their lives many more good than bad actions; as the greatest liar does, by the constitution of his nature, doubtless speak many truths to every lie he utters. One great source of misapprehension is, that virtues and good qualities are silent, secret, noiseless; vices are bold, public, noisy, seen by all, felt by all, noted by all.

But whether this be so or not, the ground for rejecting the doctrine of innate original moral depravity will not be materially affected. It is not supported by observation and experience, as we have a right to demand of a doctrine so apparently inconsistent with the moral attributes of the Deity.

What I assert upon this point, and think to be very obvious and capable of being made out to entire satisfaction is, that observation and experience are altogether favourable to the view I have stated of the human character and condition, and that without revelation there is nothing that would lead a reflecting man to the thought of an innate moral depravity.

It is easy to bring together into one picture, and place in a strong light, with exaggerated features, all the bad passions in their uncontrolled and unqualified state, all the atrocious crimes that have been committed, all the bad dispositions that have been indulged; but the picture, though it contain nothing, but what is found in men, will be far, very far, from being a just

picture of human nature. Let all that is virtuous and kind, and amiable, and good, be brought into the picture, and presented in their full proportions, and the former will be found to constitute a far less part of it, than we were ready to imagine.

Our most correct ideas of human nature will be drawn from the characteristics of infancy, and the earliest indications of disposition, tendency, and character in the infant mind; and if the nature of man be corrupt, inclined to evil, and evil only, it will appear there with its unequivocal marks. But do we find it there, and is it the common, untaught sentiment of mankind, that it exists there? Far from it. Innocence, and simplicity, and purity are the characteristics of early life. Truth is natural; falsehood is artificial. Veracity, kindness, good-will flow from the natural feelings. Duplicity, and all the cold, and selfish, and calculating manners of society are the fruit of education, and intercourse with the world. We have marks enough of a feeble, helpless nature, calling for sympathy, assistance, support, kindness; but we see no proofs of depravity, of malignity, of inclination to evil in preference to good. How early does the infant discover affection, attachment, gratitude to those from whom it receives kindness! How universally is it an object of interest to those about it! Would it be so, if it manifested such tokens, as the Orthodox doctrine of depravity supposes, of an inclination, disposition, and tendency, wholly directed to evil, and if it appeared to possess nothing good, and no tendency to good?

Instead of this, must it not naturally be the object of aversion and disgust, and especially so to pious and virtuous persons, who can only love and approve those, whom God loves and approves; and who therefore can see in little children, only objects of the divine displeasure and wrath, beings wholly averse to God and all that is good, and who deserve, not sympathy and affection, but all punishments of this world and the world to come?

It is often said, that children are naturally inclined to falsehood and deception, and that they early lie and deceive, rather than speak the truth. But this charge needs proof; and I apprehend it will be found, that evidence is abundantly against it, and in favour of the natural veracity of children. It will rarely be found, that children disregard the truth, till by example, or bad education, or peculiar circumstances of temptation, they have learned to overcome and counteract the tendency of nature. That they are so proverbially simple, unsuspicious, and easily imposed upon, arises from their judging others by themselves. It is because they themselves are conscious of no thought of deceiving, that they never suspect others. Great differences of character in this, as in other respects, appear at an early age; but what I have stated, I am persuaded is the general character, until the disposition and tendency of nature has been changed by education, example, and circumstances.

It is alleged also, that children are naturally cruel, and in proof of it, the pleasure they seem to take in tor-

turing insects and small animals is sometimes mentioned. But the pleasure, which the convulsions and throes of a tortured insect or animal give to a child, arises from another source than cruelty, or the desire of giving pain. It is wholly to be attributed to the love of excitement, and the pleasure it takes in rapid and violent motion; and is wholly unconnected with the idea of suffering in the creature, with whose convulsions it is delighted. The same pleasure would be derived from the power of producing the same convulsive motions, and the same appearance in any inanimate substance. In proof of this, let a clear idea of the suffering of the insect be communicated to the child, and it will no longer take pleasure in its convulsions. A sentiment of compassion will be raised. It will be as eager to rescue it from its suffering, as before it was to inflict that suffering. This I am persuaded will usually, if not always, be the case. But if it were from native cruelty, the *love* of inflicting pain, or from any depravity of nature; instead of ceasing from it the moment it was made acquainted with the suffering of the animal, that knowledge would be a new motive to proceed; as it would give it the satisfaction of knowing, that its malignant purpose was effected, its cruel design accomplished. The same account is to be given of what is often called a mischievous disposition in children. It is not the love of mischief, but an exuberant love of activity. The mischief or inconvenience which they occasion to others is no part of the motive, but simply the love of action and strong excitement; and it may

be accompanied with the kindest feelings, the most sincere desire of giving pleasure to others, and as sincere an unwillingness to give pain or to cause uneasiness or displeasure.

Indeed I know not a single mark of early depravity, common to children in general, which may not, as these are, be fairly traced to causes, which imply no degree of depravity, and no fault of character, or of disposition. Individuals there may be, who give very early tokens of great perversity of mind, and corruption of heart. But these are exceptions from the general character of human nature, and, as such, have no place in the present argument; and if they had any, would be decisive, not in favour of the Orthodox doctrine, but against it; as the *exception*, in its nature, proves the *opposite rule*. If great depravity is the exception, exemption from depravity must be the rule.

No man, I am persuaded, was ever led by personal observation and experience to the thought of an original depravity of human nature, according to which, by the bias of nature, all, without exception, who come into the world, are from their birth inclined wholly to evil, and averse to good.

And as little, I am persuaded, would any one be led to such an opinion by the general current of scripture. I am led to think so by a general view of the commands, precepts, exhortations, promises, and threatenings of religion, and by the whole history of the divine dispensations to men; and also by attending to a great number of particulars, each of which,

separately, seems to me to imply, that mankind come into the world innocent and pure, the objects of the complacency of the Creator, and no more inclined, by the nature God has given them, to sin, than to virtue ; no more disposed to hate and disobey, than to love and obey their Maker. I shall instance only in one, but that alone, in my opinion, is decisive of the question. I refer to the manner in which little children are, on two occasions, spoken of by our Saviour, and on one by the Apostle Paul. (Matt. xix. 14.) " Suffer little children to come unto me—for of such is the kingdom of heaven." These appear to have been infants, or at least very small children, for he took them into his arms and blessed them. There is no intimation of any thing peculiar in them; no evidence that they were a few selected from among many; nothing to suggest that they were different from other children; but rather, that they were like other children. There is not the slightest intimation that these particular children had become the subjects of any great moral change. But if they were depraved, destitute of holiness, averse from all good, inclined to all evil, enemies of God, subjects of his wrath, justly liable to all punishments, could our Saviour declare respecting them, " of such is the kingdom of God?" And could he, on another occasion, say, (Matt. xviii. 3,) " Unless ye be converted, and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of God?" And again, (Mark x. 14. Luke xviii. 16,) " Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein?"

Could the Apostle Paul recommend to the Corinthians (1 Cor. xiv. 20,) "Be not children in understanding, but in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men;" that is, in understanding, in the power of distinguishing right and wrong, and perceiving the truth, show yourselves to be men; but in your dispositions, in your moral characters, manifest the gentleness, and mildness, and purity of children? I know not how those passages are to be explained, so as to consist with the doctrine of innate depravity, rendering those who are the subjects of it enemies to God &c. until renewed by the special influence of the spirit of God. I have never seen them satisfactorily explained upon that supposition, nor do I believe that they admit of such explanation. They most clearly imply, until turned from their obvious meaning, that young children are objects of the Saviour's complacency and affection; that their innocency, gentleness, and good disposition, are the proper objects of imitation; that they are, what men are to become by conversion or regeneration.

But there are, as I have said, a few texts, from which the doctrine I am considering is inferred, and these have been brought forward, and placed in all the strength of which they are capable, by those who believe and defend the doctrine, and particularly by the able advocate it has found in the author of the pamphlet before me.

It is not pretended, I believe, by any of the defenders of the native, hereditary depravity of the hu-

man race, that the doctrine is, any where in scripture, expressly asserted. It is not a matter of direct assertion, but of inference. It is considered as implied in several passages. Now I admit that a doctrine, no where expressly taught, may yet be so clearly, and constantly implied, may so enter into the whole texture of the sacred writings, and appear in every part, as to be as reasonable an object of our faith, as those doctrines, which are the most distinctly and formally enunciated. But examples of this kind are usually (I will not affirm always, but usually) such as are presented, not a few times only, and then in a doubtful form, but such as appear constantly, and enter as it were into the very substance of the whole. Such, for instance, is the being of God, no where asserted, but every where implied. Such is the moral freedom of man, upon which rests his accountability as a moral being; and such, in my apprehension, is the doctrine, that men become sinners, guilty before God, and objects of his displeasure only by their personal acts, and not by the nature with which they came into being.

The first text adduced, as implying innate total depravity, is Gen. vi. 5. A few remarks will show how little it is to the purpose, and how far from supporting what is made to rest upon it. For, in the first place, it relates not to mankind universally, but to the degenerate race of men of that age, so remarkably and universally corrupt, beyond all that had gone before, or have followed since, as to call for the most signal tokens of the vengeance of heaven. In the second place,

were it said of all men in every age, instead of being confined, as it is, to the inhabitants of the earth at that particular time, it would still be nothing to the purpose, for which it is brought. There is no assertion of native derived depravity, none of a corrupt nature, no intimation of hereditary guilt, no reference to innate aversion to good and inclination to evil. It is the mere assertion of a state of great corruption and wickedness, which no one denies ; and not only of external actions, such as " the world being full of violence," but of purposes and dispositions of the heart, implying deep-rooted and radical wickedness, expressed by " the imaginations of the heart." But this is all perfectly consistent with their coming into being, innocent and pure. It is not what they are by nature, but by habit ; not what they were as they came from the hands of the Creator, but what they have become in the use or rather abuse of his gifts, and of the condition in which he placed them.

It is said that the language here is universal, as also when it is used again in the viii. chapter ; and that its application to *man universally* in all ages and nations, is confirmed by the passages quoted by Paul, in the iii. chapter of Romans from Psalms xiv. liii. v. cxl. x. xxxvi. and Isaiah lix. where he describes Jews and Gentiles of that age, in passages borrowed from the Old Testament, and applies them as descriptive of the character of mankind without exception. But in each case the argument wholly fails of proving what it is brought to prove ; because it depends for its

force on an interpretation of language, which cannot be adopted without leading to consequences, which the advocates of universal original depravity would be as slow to admit, as its opposers.

It goes on the supposition that the sacred writers used words, as no other writers ever did use them, with perfect philosophical exactness, instead of the popular sense; and that their writings were to be interpreted by rules, to which no other writings will bear to be subjected.

Universal expressions, like those in the texts in question, are so far from being always used in their strict literal sense, that they are *usually relative*, to be understood and interpreted in relation to the subject and occasion. Thus when it is said, (1 Tim. ii. 4,) "God will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth," it relates to the question, whether any class or nation of men are excluded from the favour and good will of God, and therefore ought to be excluded from a share in the benevolent regards and prayers of Christians; so that *all men* means, not every individual, but all ranks, descriptions, and conditions of men. In the unlimited sense of the words it is not true. It is not true that God wills every individual to come to the knowledge of the truth, i. e. of the Gospel; for thousands are precluded from the possibility of it by the circumstances of their being. Nor is it true, that he wills all men to be finally saved; but only all of every rank, and every nation, who are penitent, obedient, and faithful. He wills none to be

excluded from having the truth proposed, and salvation offered to them. And that *all* who receive and obey it, shall actually obtain the salvation offered. So also (Tit. ii. 11) when it is said, "the grace of God bringing salvation hath appeared to *all* men," the meaning cannot be, *every individual*, for it never has been published to *all* in that sense. But, as in the other case, to men of every nation, age, rank, condition, and in the same sense in which Paul (Col. i. 23) spoke of the Gospel as "preached to every creature under heaven."

It is in a similar, popular, qualified sense, a sense never leading men into mistakes upon other subjects and common occasions, that Moses, speaking of the general wickedness and corruption of manners, which were the occasion of the flood, uses language, which in its strictly literal import might be understood to mean, that there was no virtue remaining on the earth; though he immediately tells us, that Noah was an exception to the prevailing wickedness, that "he found favour in the eyes of the Lord, (ch. vi. 8, 9) being a just man, perfect in his generations, and one who walked with God."

The same remark occurs with equal force in respect to the passage so much relied on in the xiv. Psalm. Not only is there no intimation as to the origin and source of the evil, no intimation of an inbred, innate, hereditary depravity, but only of great and general corruption of manners; but though a verbal universality is expressed, the very Psalm itself takes care to

teach us with what qualifications it is to be understood. For while it asserts, in the strong language of emotion and eastern hyperbole, "that all were gone aside, all together become filthy, none that did good, *no, not one,*" the writer seems wholly unconscious of a design to have his language understood according to its literal import; for he immediately goes on with expressions absolutely incompatible with such a meaning. He goes on to speak of a "people of God, a generation of the righteous, whose refuge was God." The same is the case with each of the other Psalms, quoted by Paul in his Epistle to the Romans.

But it is of little comparative importance, whether the authors of the Psalms, or the Apostle in quoting them, meant to be understood as expressing a general truth in popular language, or as expressing themselves with literal philosophical exactness. Understand them in the most unlimited, unqualified sense, of which their words are capable, they express only what no one will deny, that all men are sinners. The question will still be open, as before, how this universality of sin and great corruption of manners are to be accounted for. Whether, as the advocates of Orthodoxy contend, men come into the world with a corrupt nature, prone only to wickedness, and utterly incapable of any good thought or action, till renewed by an influence of the holy spirit, which they can do nothing to procure; or as Unitarians believe, this corrupt nature is not what they received from God, but what they have made for themselves. That they were not made sin-

ners, but became so by yielding to temptations, which it was in their power to resist, by obeying the impulse of the passions, and the calls of appetite, in opposition to the direction of reason and the notices of conscience; by subjecting themselves to the dominion of the inferior part of their nature, instead of putting themselves under the guidance of their superior faculties.

Questions may be asked upon this statement, which cannot be answered, because we have not faculties which enable us in any cases to trace things up to the first cause and spring of action. But no difficulty so great and insurmountable meets us, as, on the opposite theory, is the moral difficulty in which it involves the character of the Author of our being. When we have traced back the wickedness of men, as it actually exists, to the voluntary neglect, and perversion, and abuse of the nature God has given them, we can go no farther.

It is asserted, (pp. 38, 39) "that when we read in the Bible the highest descriptions of human wickedness in the old world, in Sodom, in Canaan, in Jerusalem; or of the wickedness of individuals, as Pharaoh, Saul, Jeroboam, and Judas; it is perfectly just and natural for us to reflect, *such is human nature, such is man;* and Orthodox writers reason in an unexceptionable manner, when they undertake to show, what *human nature* is, from the description which is given of the wickedness of man in the Old Testament."

The writer, I think, must perceive that he has expressed himself rashly or carelessly, when he considers

clearly the force and bearing of what he has said in the above paragraph. Are we to consider those places, which, singled out and distinguished from all others, are expressly declared to have been destroyed for their enormous and incorrigible wickedness, as fair representatives of the usual state and character of the human race? People, who were ordered to be wholly extirpated for the very purpose of stopping the contagion of their vices, preventing the spread of the infection, and serving as a warning to other nations to prevent their becoming like them? Are Pharaoh, Jeroboam, and Judas, fair examples and representatives of human nature? Men, singled out in a history of two thousand years, as instances of uncommon wickedness, visited with as uncommon tokens of retributory justice? Let it be asked, why the cruelty and obstinacy of Pharaoh, rather than the humanity, and piety, and meekness of Moses; why the idolatry, and unprincipled ambition, and selfishness of Jeroboam, rather than the piety, tenderness of conscience, and public spirit of Josiah; why the single wretch, who was so base and sordid as to sell and betray his Master, rather than the eleven, who were true and faithful to him, should be selected as specimens of the race to which they belong, and the great community of which they make a part?

Would you select the period of seven years' famine, as an example of the usual fertility of Egypt? The desolating pestilence in the days of David, as a fair specimen of the salubrity of the climate of Israel?

Would you go to a lazar-house or hospital, rather than to the fields, the wharves, and the factories, to know what is the usual state of human health and activity? Is an ideot or a madman a just specimen of the human intellect? Or are we to find in our prisons, and at the gallows, in highwaymen, pirates, and murderers, a true index to point out the general morals of the community?

It is unnecessary to multiply remarks on the next text brought to prove human depravity. (Jer. xvii. 9) "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Admit that it relates to a prevailing trait in the human character; do we not well know, that in the common use of language, such general expressions are seldom to be understood as universal in their application? They are to be understood in a limited and popular sense. What is more than this, though the text were intended to express a trait of character absolutely universal, it has no more relation to the question respecting the source of human wickedness, whether it be natural or acquired, than any other descriptions of prevalent wickedness in the world. But the total irrelevancy of the text to the purpose for which it is brought, appears best by considering the subject matter, about which it is introduced. The prophet is stating the safety of trusting in God, and the insecurity of trusting in man. The reason is, that men are deceitful, and not to be depended on. Now this reason would be good, and support the prophet's conclusion, though deceit and treachery were not the

universal, though they were not even the general character of men. Were there many to be found, who would deceive and betray, it would be sufficient to justify the prophet, in withdrawing men from their confidence in man, and teaching them to place it in him, who can *never* fail, and will *never* deceive. And it would sufficiently account for his adding in the next verse, "I the Lord search the heart." However deceitful men may be, and able to impose on men; there is one, who is able to detect, and will not fail to punish.

From the New Testament, the first passage selected, as implying the doctrine under consideration, is the answer of Christ to Nicodemus, (John iii. 3) "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." It is contended, (pp. 42, 43) that the universal necessity of regeneration, expressed in this text, implies universal depravity. "That this necessity of a moral renovation arises from the character man possesses in consequence of his natural birth; that all must be born again, because, and only because, all without exception are, by nature, or in consequence of their natural birth, in such a state of moral impurity, as disqualifies them for the enjoyments of heaven, unless they are renewed by the holy spirit."

A single consideration convinces me, that the inference is without foundation, and that the universal necessity of regeneration may consist with original innocency, and exemption from any prevailing tendency, as we are born into the world, to vice rather than

virtue. By their natural birth men only become human, reasonable, accountable beings. "What is born of the flesh is flesh." They receive by their natural birth only the human nature. They receive no moral character, but only the faculties and powers, in the exercise of which a moral character is to be formed. The formation of this character introduces them into a new state of being, and by whatever means, and at whatever time it takes place, it may be called, by no very remote or unusual figure, a new birth ; and those, who have thus acquired a moral character, and received the principles of a spiritual life, in addition to the natural human life, may be said to be born again. Now if this was what Jesus meant in what he said to Nicodemus, it will no more imply original sin, than original holiness. It will only imply the absence or want of that, which was necessary to becoming a subject of the kingdom of God. The terms *new birth, born again, born of the spirit, renewed, become a new man,* are applied with as much propriety to those, who receive the influences of the Gospel, and acquire the character, which it is intended to form, on the supposition of original innocence and purity, as upon that of native depravity and original sinfulness. In each case alike, it expresses a great moral change, and implies the formation of a new character, not possessed before. On the supposition, therefore, that this passage refers, as is generally supposed by interpreters, to that great moral change, which the religion of the Gospel is to produce on those who embrace it, in order to their

being fit members of the kingdom of heaven on earth and in glory; it will be seen to be nothing to the purpose of those, who attempt to build upon it the doctrine of a moral depravity, with which all men are born into the world. It will only imply, that they do not possess by birth that character of personal holiness and positive virtue, which is necessary to their being Christians, fit subjects of the present and future kingdom of God.

The passage, (Rom. v. 12) "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned," is of another kind, and to be shown to have no relation to the subject by other considerations. The whole force of this passage, (if it have any, as relates to this subject,) lies in the last clause, "For that all have sinned." Now if this clause be understood in a sense, which shall prove any thing to the purpose, it will prove the genuine old Calvinistic doctrine, the imputation of Adam's sin. It leads back to the notion of a federal head, of Adam's acting not only on his own responsibility, but for all his posterity; acting in their stead, so that his action was theirs, and they "sinned *in him* and fell *with him* in his first transgression." They are all sinners by the sin of him, their representative, federal head. The myriads who die in earliest infancy, before it is possible for them to perform any act, or to have any volition, either sinful or virtuous, yet die because they are sinners. They are sinners then by the sin of another, by the imputation

of sin to them; and this is the true doctrine of Calvinism; and this, it seems to me, is also the doctrine of Dr. Woods, notwithstanding his explicit rejection of it, as stated in words. For besides that he acquiesces in the qualified statement of Stapfer, (p. 45) (which, after all, must mean the doctrine of imputation in its full extent, if it have any intelligible meaning; since God's giving Adam a *posterity* like himself, if it mean any thing to the purpose, must mean *sinners* like himself;) besides this, he asserts, that the Apostle's reasoning goes on the ground, that (p. 46) "Adam's transgression had, in the plan of the divine administration, such a relation to his posterity, that in consequence of it, they were *constituted sinners*, and subjected to death and all other sufferings, as *penal evils*." Now if the posterity of Adam being *constituted sinners*, and subjected to all sufferings, as *penal evils*, that is, as punishments, in consequence of his transgression, mean any thing to the purpose for which it is introduced, and yet short of the common Calvinistic notion of imputation, I am unable to perceive what it is, and it needs explanation, and a more definite statement, than I have seen.

But I am persuaded the passage has no such meaning. It is a single phrase taken away from its connexion, and what is more, out of the middle of an argument. Did it therefore, as it does not, express distinctly our original native depravity, it would give very little satisfaction alone; for there is no sentiment so absurd, that it may not be supported by single sentences, thus detached from the connexion in

which they are used. But I have observed that in its most obvious sense it expresses no such native corruption. Understood literally, the only assertion it contains with certainty is that of a fact, which none will deny, the universality of sin, that *all* have sinned. Now the nature of the universality intended to be asserted, in this, as in every case, is to be learned from the circumstances of the case. All who are *capable of sinning*, all *as soon as* they are capable of it, all as soon as they are *moral agents*. Such limitations of the sense of universal expressions in other cases are constantly occurring. Were all the inhabitants of a country required to take an oath of allegiance to the government; the requisition would be considered as complied with, though no infants and small children had taken the oath, and all would be considered as included under its obligation. But there is another consideration, which ought to prevent this text from being considered of any weight on the subject. The whole passage in which it stands is one of the most intricate and difficult in the New Testament. The phrase,* on which so much is made to depend,

* Ἐφ' ᾧ, in our translation, "*for that*," has been rendered by the several phrases, *because, inasmuch as, as far as, in whom, unto which, after whom, on account of whom.* When meanings so various are assigned to this text by Schleusner, Elsner, Taylor, Doddridge, Whitby, and Macknight, I am justified in attributing to it a degree of obscurity and uncertainty, which should prevent it from being alleged with much confidence in proof of any doctrine, which it may be supposed to express.

admits equally well of several different translations, each of which will give it a different meaning; and its connexion with the passage in which it stands is not such, as to help us, to any degree of certainty, in determining by which version its true sense is expressed. Dr. Woods himself, "allows it to be in some respects very obscure." He will doubtless admit then, that the support derived to a doctrine, depending on any particular translation of this text, or any particular meaning assigned to it, will be of very little value; of none indeed any farther, than it receives support itself from other plainer passages.

Ephesians ii. 3. "And were by nature children of wrath, even as others." The connexion and circumstances of the case show the meaning of this verse, and that it furnishes no proof of inbred moral corruption, but only of corrupt and wicked habits. It refers to the former state of Jews as well as heathen, before their conversion to Christianity. In that state, they were all alike, children of wrath, deserving of wrath, not as they came into the world, not as they came from their Maker's hand, but as they became by the habits, and customs, and practices of that state, into which they were born; which was a state of nature, as compared with the state of grace, into which they were introduced by Christianity. What they were before they became Christians, they were by nature; what they became afterward, was by the grace of God, which appeared bringing salvation. The state of nature was that, into which they came by their birth; as distin-

guished from the state of grace into which they came, when they embraced Christianity. When they received Christianity, they were born again, born of water by their baptism, born of the spirit by receiving the spirit of Christianity, by being renewed in the temper of their mind. Then they were no longer children of wrath, when the new birth was completed, and their religion had produced all its moral effects.

According to this view of the subject, the state of nature has no reference to what a man brings into the world with him, but it stands opposed to a state of grace. It is that state in which all are, Jews as well Gentiles, before they become Christians. This language of the Apostle, like much of that in the Epistles, referring to the same subject, relates to men, as bodies of men, not as individuals. It compares them together as bodies, not as individuals. It speaks of them *generally*, as in their heathen and Jewish state, and then in their Christian state. In the former "dead in sin," in the latter "quickened, and raised up," and (v. 5, 6.) "made to sit together in heavenly places."

The former, (12, 13.) "Strangers, aliens, without God, without hope, afar off;" the latter, "made nigh by the blood of Christ."

The former, (19.) "Strangers and foreigners;" the latter, "fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God."

The former, (3, 1.) "children of wrath, having their conversation in the lusts of the flesh, dead in

trespasses and sins;" the latter, (4, 5, 10.) "by the rich mercy of God, quickened, saved by grace, created by Christ Jesus unto good works."

The whole of this refers to the same thing; not to the personal condition of individuals as such, but to that of the whole body of Christians, as quickened and raised from the moral and spiritual death of their original Jewish and heathen state; as delivered from the state of wrath, in which they had lived from their birth; and by the rich mercy of God and the faith of the Gospel, made to sit together in heavenly places, that is, to enjoy all the privileges and hopes of Christians.

It has no reference therefore to the state in which persons are born into the world in all ages. Those now born into the world in Christian lands, are not in the same sense that these Ephesians were, *children of wrath by nature*, but as these same Ephesians were after their conversion to Christianity, *saved by the grace of God, quickened, raised from the dead, made nigh by the blood of Christ, fellow-citizens with the saints, of the household of God.*

All this language was applied to the Ephesians universally after their conversion, and all of it is as applicable universally now to those, who are Christians by birth; as distinguished from those, who are heathen by birth.

The phrase we are considering then must be seen to be wholly inapplicable to the purpose for which it is alleged.

We are called upon by the advocates for the doctrine of depravity to show, that it is inconsistent with the moral perfection of God ; that it is not taught in the scriptures ; and that all the wickedness in the world may be accounted for without admitting the doctrine.

With respect to the first, I might satisfy myself with saying, that it belongs to those, who maintain the doctrine, to prove its consistency with the moral perfection of God. But I have no wish to avail myself of the right, which every one has, who is called upon to prove a negative, of throwing back the burden of proof. It is one of the cases in which the negative is susceptible of satisfactory proof.

When we charge the common doctrine of depravity with being inconsistent with the moral character of God, it is, as taken in connexion with the rest of the system, of which it makes a part. It is the whole system together that we maintain is incapable of being defended in consistency with the moral attributes of the Author of our being. Whatever the nature of man be, it is such, as he received at the hand of his Maker. Whatever tendency and proneness to evil there may be in him, as he is born into the world, it is no greater than his Maker gave him. We assert then that no guilt, no fault can be attributed to him by his Maker for such proneness. If God be a just being, he cannot be displeased with him for being what he made him. If he be a good being, he cannot punish him for it. To subject him to *penal evils* for a pro-

pensity to sin, born with him in consequence of his descent from a sinful ancestor, is not the less cruel and unjust for his being *voluntary* in following that propensity, unless he had also the natural or communicated power to resist it. If he have that power, then he becomes guilty and deserving of punishment, so soon as in the indulgence of the propensity he actually becomes a sinner, but no sooner. Till then, even on the supposition above, no guilt is incurred. The propensity itself is no sin and implies no guilt. And afterward the justice of his subjection to penal evils depends on his power of being and acting otherwise than he does. Had he no power to be, to feel, and to act otherwise than he does, he could not be guilty and deserving of punishment for continuing in his present state. But according to the scheme, which assumes to be that of Orthodoxy, those who are the subjects of this innate moral depravity, inclination to evil, and wholly "wrong state of the moral affections and actions," (p. 31) are utterly incapable of doing any thing toward producing in themselves a moral change, or which shall be a reason with God for granting to them that grace, which is necessary to their regeneration and sanctification. It is only the irresistible influence of the spirit of God, which can renew and change their nature. Now we assert, that until this grace has been imparted and resisted, there can be no blame-worthiness. Beings so situated may be the objects of pity to the Author of their being, and his pity may be manifested in bringing suffering upon

them in the way of dicipline, for the purpose of promoting their renovation, and bringing them to a state of holiness : but it cannot be inflicted by a just being as punishment. Now, if I rightly understand the scheme of Calvinism, divine punishments are not, according to that scheme, disciplinary, but vindictive. God punishes his offending creatures, not to reform them, but to vindicate his authority. The sufferings of the wicked have no tendency to reform, but rather to harden and confirm them in their opposition to God and their duty.

Now however consistent with justice may be the infliction of vindictive punishment, where it is in the power of the subject of it to be different from what he is, and to act otherwise than he does ; it is contended that it cannot be so, where the guilt to be punished is inbred, a part of man's original nature, such as he came from the Creator's hands ; where, in fact, the sinner is as his Maker sent him into the world, not as he has made himself by his own act, by the abuse, or neglect, or perversion of his power, and his faculties and affections.

That the doctrine is not contained in the scriptures I have endeavoured to show, by showing the insufficiency of the several texts from the Old and New Testament, on which Dr. Woods relies for its support ; and that they admit of a satisfactory interpretation, which gives no countenance to it. I know very well, that these are not the only texts which are supposed to relate to the subject ; but I do not know that any others

are thought to have more weight, or to present greater difficulties. I have limited myself to these, solely from a wish not to extend the discussion beyond what was rendered necessary, by the course pursued by Dr. Woods; and presuming that the texts, which he has selected, were those on which he would place his chief reliance.

When the extent and prevalence of wickedness in the world are urged as indicating an original inherent corruption, and we are called upon to account for it in a satisfactory manner, without admitting the Orthodox doctrine of depravity; I shall think it sufficient to refer you to the account which I have given of our moral constitution, and the state of trial in which we are placed. Being, by the whole of our nature and condition, equally capable of virtue and of vice, of a right and of a wrong course; it is no more difficult to account for the actual existence of the highest, than of the lowest degree of either. But I have also another consideration to suggest. It will not, I suppose, be pretended, that our first parents were, previous to their fall, subjects of the same moral depravity, which is attributed to their descendants. It will be admitted that they were created innocent and pure, "in the image of God in righteousness and holiness;" yet they became sinners. Now it belongs to him, who urges the wickedness of mankind as a proof of innate original depravity, to account for the sin of our first parents, who are admitted to have been created, not only in a state of innocence, but of positive holiness.

I have one only remark more, which I wish to make in conclusion upon this subject. The doctrine, which I have been considering in this letter, Dr. Woods styles, (p. 31) his "humbling conclusion." In this he intimates, what is often more distinctly expressed by Orthodox writers, that the doctrine is of a more humbling nature, more expressive of self abasement, and of a sense of human demerit and unworthiness, than that which declares our nature to be originally pure, innocent, free from enmity to God, and from an inclination only to evil. But with how little justice this is claimed, I am persuaded you will be convinced, by a moment's reflection. Can that be thought a more humbling doctrine, which traces all our wicked actions up to an original constitution, given us at first by our Maker, and a depravity of nature which he gave us when he gave us being; than that which attributes all our sins to our own neglect, and abuse, and perversion of the gifts of God? We have certainly no cause to feel ourselves humbled under a sense of any thing that we are by nature. We have occasion to be ashamed only of what we have become by practice. For the nature God has given us no sentiment but that of gratitude is due. Humility and self-condemnation should spring only from the consciousness of a course of life not answering to the powers, and faculties, and privileges of our nature. What God has made us, we should think of with unmingled satisfaction; what we have made ourselves, we cannot think of with too deep regret, and sorrow, and shame.

LETTER IV.

In the system of Orthodoxy defended by Dr. Woods, the doctrine of Election stands in immediate and close connexion with that of the total depravity of human nature, and is brought forward by him the next in order. He seems to enter upon the discussion of this subject with the impression, that he has strong prepossessions to encounter, and that these prepossessions are not without foundation. "I acknowledge," he says, (p. 52) "that orthodox writers and preachers of high repute, but deficient in judgment, have, in some instances, exhibited the doctrine in a manner, which has given too much occasion for these prepossessions; and too much occasion for this author (Mr. Channing) to think, that the doctrine is inconsistent with the moral perfection of God." Again, (p. 63) "Orthodox writers have not unfrequently made use of expressions, which, at first view, may seem to furnish occasion for some of the heavy charges brought against us by our opposers. But for the rash, unqualified expressions of men, who have become hot and violent by controversy, we are not to be held responsible. We here enter our solemn protest against the language, which has sometimes been employed, and the conceptions which have sometimes been entertained on this subject by men, who have been denominated Calvinists." Again, (p. 79) "I am willing to concede, that *those views* of the doctrine of Election, against which Whitby and many other respectable

writers direct their principal arguments, are *justly liable to objection.*" From these passages one might be led to suppose, that those, whose opinions Dr. Woods professes to represent, maintain the doctrine of Election in some qualified sense, and not as it is to be found in the popular writers, and confessions. And in this he would be confirmed by the statement at the close of the discussion. (p. 81) "You now see what we mean by the doctrine of Election, and in what manner we believe it. *As the result of his own unsearchable wisdom and grace, and for reasons which relate to the great ends of his administration, God eternally purposed to save a great number of our race, and purposed to save them precisely in the manner in which he actually does save them.*" From this form of the doctrine, I presume no Unitarian would dissent; and were there nothing in the Letters of Dr. Woods to show that the Orthodox faith is something more than is here expressed, one would have supposed he might have been spared the labour of any formal defence of it against objection, and all that solicitude which he seems to have felt "in disclosing to his readers with the utmost frankness his inmost thoughts upon the subject." (p. 82.)

If this is a complete statement of the doctrine of Election, as it is understood by the Orthodox, and if Dr. Woods and those whom he represents, and for whom he professes to speak, do not maintain the opinions against which the Sermon of Mr. Channing is directed; there seems to have been no good reason,

why he should feel himself concerned at all in the charge. *Calvinists* only, who *do* maintain them, can fairly consider their opinions as attacked, and themselves called upon to defend them.

But Dr. Woods has no where informed us, who those "Orthodox writers of high repute" are, who have exposed the doctrine to objection by their injudicious exhibitions of it; nor has he told us in what respects they have given a false representation of it. It is to be regretted that he did not think it necessary to do this, as he must perceive how much it is calculated to perplex, and how much it may mislead, his readers. For, as a simple statement drawn from the several parts of his letters will show, it cannot have been his design to express his dissent from the *doctrine* of Election as expressed in the strongest language of orthodox writers; but only to guard against *the impression*, which he supposes the strong and naked statement of it may be likely to make.

The following is the statement of this doctrine by the Westminster Divines, as it stands in their Confession of Faith, and more briefly in the Assembly's Catechism.

"God did from all eternity freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass."

"By the decree of God some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death."

"These angels and men, thus predestinated and fore-ordained, are particularly and unchangeably de-

signed, and their number so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished."

"Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing, in the creature, as conditions or causes, moving him thereunto."

"As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, fore-ordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore, they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ, &c. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, &c. but the elect only."

"The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy, as he pleaseth, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sin."

I will now place before you, in the best manner I am able, such a view of Dr. Woods' opinions upon the subject, as is to be found in scattered passages through his VIIth and VIIIth letters.

"The Father has given to Christ a part of the human race, and those, who have thus been given to Christ, are the persons, who shall have eternal life;"

(p. 54) and this, he goes on to prove at large, "denotes *all who shall finally be saved.*" (p. 55.)

"In every case, a person's being given to Christ *secures* his coming to Christ; and, when Christ speaks of those, who were given him of the Father, he includes the whole number that shall be saved." (p. 56.)

"God has a *purpose, choice, will,* and *good pleasure,* respecting those who are saved; a *purpose* or *choice,* which was in the mind of God before they existed; a purpose, which does not rest upon any personal merit in those, who are its objects; of grace, excluding *all works of righteousness* from having any concern in this subject." (p. 57.)

"Nothing is effected by the efforts of man, but every thing depends on the mercy of God." (p. 59.)

"The sovereign purpose of God relates to man's eternal interests, to their religious character and salvation."....."I could, as I think, make it appear, that the doctrine of God's sovereign Election is the only doctrine, which accounts satisfactorily for *the actual difference, which exists between true believers, and the rest of the world.*" (pp. 61, 62.)

"We hold it as a fact, universally, that impenitent, unrenewed sinners do no good work, which God regards as a condition of their being renewed, or on account of which he has promised them regeneration: that, in all cases, he calls and renews them according to his own purpose and grace." (pp. 67, 68.)

"We believe that those, who are chosen of God to salvation, are not chosen because they were, in them-

selves, more worthy of this blessing than others, that God looked upon their moral feelings and conduct with the same disapprobation, and had the same view of their ill-desert, and that he chose them, as we may say, *for reasons of state;* for general reasons in his government, which he has not revealed."...." The purpose and administration of God are, in this respect, different from what our wisdom would dictate, or our affections choose; they cannot be accounted for by any principles known to us, but result from the infinite perfection of God, and are conformed to reasons, which he has concealed in his own mind." (p. 74)

If you will compare these passages with those before quoted from the Westminster Confession, you will find that they differ from each other only in the degree of clearness and explicitness, with which the same doctrine is expressed.

I shall now endeavour to show, that the " method of designating the heirs of salvation," which this doctrine implies, can neither be reconciled with our natural notions of the moral character of God, derived from the use of the faculties he has given us, and our observation of his conduct in the government of the world; nor with what he has made known to us of his character, and purposes, and government in the Christian revelation.

How repugnant this doctrine is to our natural reason, Dr. Woods himself seems to be fully sensible. " If it were put to my natural reason," he says, (p. 54) " to judge by its own light respecting what is called the

doctrine of Election; my judgment might agree with the judgment of those, who reject the doctrine. If the question were, what difficulties attend the doctrine, I might perhaps bring forward as many as others."

Now, as God is the Author of our being, and as that portion of reason, which we have, was given us by him for our guide, it is certainly very remarkable, and what we should not expect, that instead of indicating to us truly his character, and dispositions, and purposes; so far as it gives us any information, it should universally mislead us respecting them. Following the light of our reason and the natural impulse of our feelings, we find it impossible to imagine, that the Author of our being, the common Parent of all, can regard and treat his offspring in the manner, which the doctrine in question attributes to him. That, without any foreseen difference of character and desert in men, before he had brought them into being, he should regard some with complacency and love, and the rest with disapprobation, and hatred, and wrath; and without any reference to the future use or abuse of their nature, should appoint some to everlasting happiness, and the rest to everlasting misery; and that this appointment, entirely arbitrary, for which no reason is to be assigned, but his sovereign will, should be the cause, and not the consequence, of the holiness of the one, and of the defect of holiness of the other. A man, who should do what this doctrine attributes to God, I will not say toward his own offspring, but toward any beings that were dependent on him, and

whose destiny was at his disposal, would be regarded as a monster of malevolence, and cruelty, and caprice. It is incredible that the Author of our being should thus have formed us with an understanding and moral feelings to lead us without fail to condemn the measures and the principles of the government of him, who so made us.

Will it be said that this repugnance which we feel to the doctrine in question is one of the proofs of the corruption of our nature? Yet whatever that nature may be, it is such as he gave us. And however imperfect our reason, it is what he gave to be our guide. It is the only immediate guide he has given us ; and it is that, which must be the ultimate judge of the evidence, and of the nature and value, of any notices which he may give of his will and purposes, by his providence or his word. Can it have been the design of the Apostle to put down our reason, our moral feelings, and natural conscience, as seems to be intimated in the pamphlet, "*by the appalling rebuke*, Who art thou that repliest against God?" But who is the man, that in the truest sense is chargeable with replying against God? Is it not he, who would set aside, as false and dangerous, the guide he has given to all for the direction of life? Is it not he, who refuses to listen to the voice, by which he speaks to all? Who calls in question the notices he gives of himself and of the principles of his government, in the only universal revelation that he has made of himself? He, it seems to me, *replies against God*, who rejects or undervalues

the notices, which he has in any way given us, of himself or of the principles of his government. Not less he, who refuses to follow reason and natural conscience, than he, who will not submit to the demands of a written revelation. Not less he, who turns his back upon the works of God, than he, who closes his eyes against his written word.

But my objection to the orthodox doctrine of Election is grounded not solely on its being irreconcileable with our reason and moral feelings ; I find it not more easy to reconcile it with the instructions of the holy scriptures. I look to the general scope of the sacred writings, as regards the disposition of the Author of nature toward his creatures, and the principles of his government ; and I find nothing to support this doctrine, but much with which it seems to be wholly incompatible. I ask how this sovereign appointment of the everlasting condition of men, " excluding all works of righteousness, as having any concern in it," and with reference to which " nothing is effected by the efforts of men," can be shown to consist with all that we find in the scriptures so clearly implying, that something is depending on the exertions men will make, and the part they will act ; for, according to this doctrine, what they are to be and how they are to act is determined beforehand, without any reference to such exertions ; with all that implies the influence of motives, since it is no such influence of motive, but " God's sovereign election, that is to account for the actual difference between true believers, and the

rest of the world;" with all that implies guilt, ill desert, blame-worthiness in the unholy, disobedient, and impenitent; for how can men be guilty of being what they were made to be? how are they deserving of blame for remaining in that moral state, in which it was determined by the sovereign appointment of God, that they should remain? With all those promises, threatenings, warnings, admonitions, exhortations, and entreaties; which imply in those, to whom they are addressed, a power of being influenced; with all that implies, that men are capable of duty and obligation, and are the proper subjects of praise and blame, and of reward and punishment?

This charge of inconsistency with the general scope of the scriptures, and the doctrine every where taught or implied in the sacred writings, has never been removed; nor can it be, I am persuaded, but by violating the plainest principles in the interpretation of language.

There is another view, in which this doctrine is at variance with what the scriptures every where present to us. I mean the righteous and benevolent character of the Author of our being. It represents him to us as a cruel and unjust being, exacting endless punishment for sins committed in following the nature he had given, and acting in pursuance of his decree. It represents him, as arbitrary and partial in his distributions; making a distinction the most momentous that can be imagined in his treatment of those, between whom there was no difference of character or of desert

as the ground of the distinction; from his mere sovereign will and good pleasure, ordaining *these* to eternal blessedness and glory, and appointing *those* to endless and hopeless misery. That it is the *righteous* only, who will thus be raised to glory, and the *wicked* only, who will be the subjects of condemnation, will make no difference in the case; since, according to the doctrine we are considering, it is not merely an absolute appointment to salvation on the one hand, and to condemnation on the other; but also to the different dispositions, character, and course of life, which are to have these opposite results. Those, and those only, who are ordained to eternal life, are also ordained to be effectually called, to be regenerated by irresistible grace, and thus to be brought, not by any thing they do, or can do themselves, but solely by the immediate power of God, out of that state of sin, in which they are by nature, to that holiness, which is to qualify them for salvation. The rest of mankind, "passed by, and ordained to dishonour and wrath for their sins," have that effectual and irresistible grace withheld from them, which was necessary to their regeneration, and without which it was impossible for them to attain to holiness and salvation.

To say, that those who are appointed to salvation, are chosen from among mankind "*for reasons of state*," (p. 74) is to say nothing that is intelligible. But to say, that they are chosen (ib.) "for reasons, which God has not revealed;—reasons, which he has concealed in his own mind; such as cannot be accounted for by any principle known to us," is something more.

It is a position, I think, unsupported by proof, and confuted distinctly by what we constantly meet with in the New Testament. In the appointment to privileges, means, and external condition, God has indeed given no account of his motives; nor assigned his reasons for the infinite variety that appears. He has exercised an absolute sovereignty, of which no account is given, and the reasons of which we are not competent to understand. But it is clearly otherwise as to the final condition of men. So far is that from being determined *by reasons of state, which he has not revealed;* that the reasons, upon which the final salvation or condemnation of every man is to take place, are distinctly assigned by our Saviour and his Apostles; not once only, but as often as they have occasion to speak of the final distinctions that are to be made between men. Those distinctions we are again and again told, are to be wholly according to the difference of moral character. It is that *these* are righteous, and *those* wicked; *these* have done well, and *those* have done ill; *these* have been faithful, and *those* unfaithful. So far are the reasons of the final distinction to be made between those who are saved, and those who perish, from being concealed in the divine mind, that nothing is more distinctly made known. The New Testament is full of it.

Nor is it with any better reason said, that, "in this respect, the purpose and administration of God are different from what our wisdom would dictate, or our affections choose." They are precisely what the wisdom and the affections of every man in their uncor-

rupted, unperverted state, would approve and concur in. And they are accounted for by principles well known to us; principles of eternal and immutable justice. Not reasons which he has concealed in his own mind, but such as he has made us perfectly capable of understanding; and such as he has clearly revealed to us in his word.

But though the general tenor of scripture seems so foreign from the doctrine we are considering, and not easily reconciled with it; there are particular texts in which it is thought to be expressly taught, or so clearly implied, that their force cannot be evaded.

The first text alleged by Professor Woods, in the pamphlet before me, is (John xvii. 2) "That he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him," and, (John vi. 37, 39) "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out. And this is the Father's will, who sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day."

With respect to the first of these, it cannot have been our Saviour's intention to declare, that a certain definite number of mankind were appointed by the Father to receive the benefit of his mediation and sacrifice, and obtain salvation, exclusive of all others; and without any thing in them, as the ground of this preference and choice, for the reasons that follow.

In the discourse with his disciples, (ch. xv.) which stands in immediate connexion with the prayer, of which this text is a part, he addresses the same per-

sons, of whom he here speaks as "given him of the Father," in language implying, that they might "abide in him, and bring forth much fruit," or failing to abide in him, might be "taken away, cast forth, cast into the fire and burned." As those who, though chosen and ordained, might or might not keep the commands, and abide in the love of him, who had thus chosen and ordained them. But according to the doctrine in question, there could be no such contingency in the case. All who are thus given, chosen, ordained, and those only, are to bring forth fruit, to keep his commands, to abide in his love, to have eternal life.

In this same discourse, again, (ch. xvi. 27) we meet with the following sentence. "For the Father himself loveth you *because ye have loved me*, and have believed that I came out from God." Here the love of God is represented, not as the cause, but the consequence, of the faith and love of the disciples, and the plain and obvious meaning of the texts in question, in their connexion with this is, that they were given to Christ, not by an arbitrary selection of them from the mass of Jews, without any thing in their character and disposition leading to the choice; but, because they were seen to be fit subjects for the kingdom of God, ready to receive the faith of the Gospel when offered to them, having already something of the Christian disposition and character, already manifesting an obedient temper, as expressed (ch. xvii. 6), they were already children of God, and were given to Christ, and came to him, because they were God's in a sense, in which the rest

of the world were not; and were then chosen, and ordained to partake in the final benefits of the Gospel, because of their faith and fidelity. This interpretation renders the whole discourse and the following prayer consistent throughout in the several parts, and consistent with the moral character of God, and the moral state of man, as a free and accountable being. With the other interpretation, I do not perceive how the texts that have been mentioned can be fairly reconciled. If by *those given to Christ*, we are to understand, as Dr. Woods asserts, (p. 54) "a certain part of the human race, who are to have eternal life, and those, denoting *all*, to whom Christ will actually give eternal life," and as his argument requires, and as he elsewhere states with sufficient distinctness, this choice and appointment to Christian faith, obedience, and eternal life, is wholly independent of any thing in them as the ground of this distinction from the rest of the world; it is impossible to see with what propriety it could be said, that "God loved them, because of their faith and love to Christ," for his distinguishing love was, by that supposition, the cause of their faith, &c.; or how any intimations could be given, that something was yet depending upon themselves; that it yet depended on themselves, whether they should abide in Christ, keep his commandments, continue in his love, and share in the great salvation; for the appointment to all this was absolute, and without any condition on their part, as the ground of it. Besides, I observe that other language of our Saviour in the discourses recorded by

this same Evangelist, is equally favourable to the supposition, "that coming to Christ, believing on him, and having eternal life," are events, not flowing from a sovereign unconditional appointment, but the result of a faithful use of means, in the exercise of a right disposition; and that the difference of character thus appearing between them, and others who neglect to come, who refuse to believe and obey, and fail of eternal life, is the ground and not the consequence of their being chosen, given to Christ, and ordained to eternal life. Thus, (John iii. 19) the ground of men's condemnation is, not an irrespective decree of God, "but their hating the light, loving the darkness, because their deeds are evil." It is their being in character and disposition opposite to those, who escape the condemnation, because they do the truth, and willingly come to the light.

Thus it is, that the reason assigned, and as is clearly implied, the *criminal reason* why the unbelieving Jews rejected the Gospel (John v. 40) was, not that they were ordained to this condemnation without any thing in them, by which they were distinguished from those, who accepted the invitation; but because they wilfully rejected the Gospel, and refused the eternal life it offered. "Ye *will* not come unto me, that ye might have life." Again, the same great moral ground of distinction appears in the declaration, (John vii. 17) "If any man *will do his will*, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." Those, who are given to Christ, chosen, ordained, who are to know of

his doctrine, to believe in him, and thus to obtain eternal life, are those, who are well disposed to it, who have an obedient temper, who are *willing to do his will.*

The observations which have been applied to this text are equally applicable to the other text under consideration. (John vi. 27) "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me;" that is, those only are given to him of the Father, those only are to receive the final blessings of the Gospel, who come to Christ. It was so when the Gospel was first promulgated. The humble, the pious, the teachable received the Gospel; all those who were of God. The proud, the irreligious rejected it; those who were not of God, but of the world. It has been so in every subsequent age.

And none of those who thus come, bringing with them the spirit of the Gospel, abiding in it, and bringing forth the fruits of righteousness, none of these will he cast off. Of all those, thus given to him, thus coming to him, thus abiding in him, thus bringing forth fruit, it is the Father's will that he should lose nothing.

From this expression in the text, however, as well as the other, an unwarrantable inference is probably drawn; that of the absolute certainty of the final salvation of all those persons, concerning whom it is spoken. But this form of words was evidently intended to express, not the particular decree, but the general purpose of heaven; not the specific effect, which is without fail to be produced, but the object and design of the divine dispensation; to be understood with similar limitations with those, which we apply to the expres-

sion, (1 Tim. ii. 4) "who will have all men to be saved." Not that every human being will be actually saved, in the sense in which *saved* is here used, but that the salvation of all was the object and design; that the offer of it was made to all, an offer which yet might be rejected. Again, (Col. i. 23) "the gospel, which was preached to every creature which is under heaven." Here the literal meaning of the sentence is not the true meaning. The Gospel had not been preached to every living creature. But the direction of the Saviour to his disciples was to preach it to every creature, that is, to *all men*. It was intended in general for all. None were excepted in the commission; none were passed by in the execution. As far as the design of the commission had been accomplished, it had been done agreeably to the direction of the Saviour. To these instances many others might be added to show, that expressions of *universal* import are often, as in the text in question, to be interpreted only in a *general sense;* and that they are frequently used to express, not an absolute decree, but a purpose or design depending on contingences, and which *may in fact* be either universal or only general. And that the example we are considering is clearly of this kind, and that it does not warrant the use, that has been made of it, we have the farther positive proof in this circumstance; that notwithstanding this unqualified expression, *one* of the persons given to Christ had been lost. "Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition." The son of perdition, it is

here clearly implied, had been given to Christ in the sense of the passage, and yet had been lost. The declaration then, "It is the Father's will that he should lose nothing," is manifestly designed to express, not a specific personal decree, but the general purpose and design.

The next passage quoted by Dr. Woods to prove an absolute personal election to salvation is Ephesians i. 3—11. "Blessed be the God and Father," &c. To all the observations made by Dr. Woods on this passage, I give my entire concurrence; yet have no hesitation in asserting, what I hope satisfactorily to prove, that it has no relation to the doctrine, which he has brought it to support.

It refers not to individuals as such, but to the Christian community. Not to final salvation, but to Christian privileges. In the first place, the Epistle is addressed to the whole Christian community at Ephesus, without any intimation, that any expressions in it are applicable to some and not to others. The terms, *saints* and *faithful in Christ Jesus*, (ver. 1) are applied alike to all, and are evidently to be understood as terms which designate the whole company of believers, and external professors, without any reference to the personal character of any, as individuals. It is again in the name of the whole Christian community, Jews and Gentiles, that the Apostle speaks, when he says, that "God hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, chosen us in *him* [that is, Christ] before the foundation of the world, predestinated us to the adoption

of children, predestinated us according to the purpose of him, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." (ver. 3, 4, 5, 11) That this choice or predestination was not that of individuals to eternal life, but of all, who received the Christian faith, to the profession and privileges of the Gospel, (besides its being thus generally addressed, and in the name of Christians at large and universally) appears still further from other expressions, addressed in the same manner. It is for these same persons, saints, faithful, chosen, predestinated, that the Apostle thought it needful very devoutly and earnestly to pray to God, "that they might be strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man, that Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith, that they might be rooted and grounded in love;" very suitable to be addressed to professed believers as a promiscuous body: but such as we should hardly expect, if the persons designated were by the very designation understood to consist only of persons certainly chosen to eternal life, and were already certainly grounded in love, were already strengthened in the inner man, had already Christ dwelling in their hearts by love.

Further, these same persons, he thinks it proper to exhort, (ch. iv. 1) "to walk worthy of the vocation with which they were called," "to walk henceforth, not as other Gentiles walk," (ver. 17) "but to put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of their mind, and to put on the

new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," and "not to grieve the holy spirit of God." (ver. 22, 23, 24, 30.) Implying, that they are liable to retain still their heathen character, notwithstanding their Christian profession; that they *may* still pursue the former conversation, which, by their profession, they have renounced; that they are in danger of failing to put off the old man, and to be, as their Christian profession requires, "renewed in righteousness and true holiness;" that they finally may, instead of following the guidance of the spirit of God, grieve it. Very suitable, therefore, to be addressed to the promiscuous body of professing Christians; very suitable if by *saints, chosen, predestinated,* this only were meant; but certainly not so, if by these terms were designated persons chosen from eternity to final salvation, and already saints and faithful in the highest and literal sense of the words. *Such,* as distinguished from the rest of the world, are not the proper subjects of exhortation to walk worthy of their Christian vocation; for the very terms applied to them imply that they cannot fail to do so; being certainly predestinated to life, they are as certainly predestinated to that character and state, to which life is promised. They cannot be exhorted to be renewed and to put on the new man;—for by the supposition against which I am contending, their renewal is already certain. It is what they have no power, either to prevent, or to bring about, or even to accelerate. Their renewal has indeed already taken place; for they are addressed,

not only as chosen and predestinated, but as saints and Christians, which, according to the scheme under consideration, they were not, till they were renewed. And with what propriety can such be exhorted "not to grieve the holy spirit of God?"

The next, and only other passage, to which Dr. Woods has referred for the direct proof of the doctrine of sovereign personal election to eternal life, is that contained in Romans ix. 11—24. A similar method of investigation to that, which was applied to the passage in Ephesians, will convince you, I think, that this is as little to the purpose as the other; and that it has no relation to an election to eternal life, but only to the privileges of the Gospel.

This will appear to you in the first place by an attention to the general scope and design of the Epistle, the subject of which was suggested by the great controversy of that age, respecting the extension of Christianity to the Gentiles, and their admission to its privileges and hopes, without being subjected to the observance of the Mosaic ritual. The Apostle combats the exclusive spirit of his Jewish brethren, by showing them, that those distinctions, on which they so valued themselves, as the chosen people of God, were done away; that Gentiles were admitted to the same rights, and to the opportunity of securing the final favour of Heaven on the same terms with them.

The Jews, as descendants of Abraham, disciples of Moses, children of the covenant and of the promises, enjoyed a high distinction and valuable privileges.

But these privileges were no security of their final acceptance with God. They were disciplinary and conditional. The knowledge of the law would be of no avail to those, who did not faithfully observe it. The sign of the covenant would not save those, who should violate it. The oracles of God, which were committed to them, would but enhance the guilt and the condemnation of those, who, with all their superior light and motives, lived no better than ignorant heathen.

On the other hand, the Gentiles, without the light of the written law, and without the sign of the covenant, the external mark of being the people of God; if, guided by the light they had, (Rom. ii. 26, 27, 29) they fulfilled the law by a virtuous life, thus showing practically "the work of the law written in the heart," (ver. 15) would secure that acceptance of God, of Him, "with whom is no respect of persons," (ver. 11) and "who will render to every man according to his deeds," (ver. 6) which the Jew must lose, who being "a Jew outwardly" only, (ver. 28) and relying on the letter and circumcision, was emboldened to neglect its moral design, and to live as a heathen. The final condition of every individual, whether Jew or Gentile, was to depend on individual personal character. (ver. 5—10) "Indignation and wrath to every soul of man that doth evil: glory, honour, and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew and also to the Gentile."

Now with this general scope and design of the first

part of the Epistle, that interpretation of the ix. ch. which refers "the purpose of God according to election," (ver. 11 et seq.) to an unconditional election of individuals to eternal life, seems to be wholly irreconcileable: whereas that, which refers it to an appointment, free and unconditional, to the participation of privileges, not only comports well with the general design of the Epistle, but makes the latter part of it a continuation of the former, and a completion of the design, that prevails in the whole preceding part.

This appears again not less clearly, when we come to a separate examination of the passage itself.

The first instance mentioned of the accomplishment of "the purpose of God according to election," is that of the appointment of Isaac, and pretermission of Ishmael and the other children of Abraham. But what purpose of God was accomplished by this? Not the salvation of Isaac, but the fulfilment of the promise to Abraham in the whole series of dispensations for promoting the knowledge of God and true religion in the world; and especially in raising up one from among his descendants, in whom "all the families of the earth were to be blessed."

The next instance, is the choice of Jacob in preference to Esau, a choice which preceded their birth, and could therefore have no respect to their good or ill desert. And this, the whole reasoning of the Apostle assures us, is applied, not to Jacob personally, but to the race descending from him; and not to them in their personal character, but solely to their designa-

tion, as a people, to a certain part in accomplishing the great purposes of heaven. In this appointment, the same free, sovereign, uncontrouled will was exercised, which is seen in the appointment of all the other circumstances, which make up the state of trial of every human being. It is "the power of the potter over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour." Upon this interpretation there is room for the appeal, (ver. 20) "shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?" Upon that interpretation, which supposes a reference to the final lot of individuals as determined by a decree that has no respect to different desert, the appeal could not be sustained.

In each of these cases we perceive a peculiar propriety in the expressions, which the Apostle applies by way of reflection, (ver. 16) "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." It was the wish of Abraham, that the blessing might be given to his eldest son Ishmael. It was the desire of Isaac, that it should descend with his eldest son Esau. But the will of neither of them was permitted to prevail; nor yet the prompt obedience of Esau, by which he hoped to secure it to himself.

I am ready to admit, with Dr. Woods, that this reflection of the Apostle implies a general principle; but it is a principle to be applied to similar cases only, not those that are dissimilar. Now similar cases are those and those only, which relate to privileges, opportunities,

blessings, which are disciplinary in their design, temporal in their duration, and make a part of human probation. That which relates directly to final salvation is dissimilar, and the same principle is not to be applied.

The case of Pharaoh is as little to the purpose as either of the others. For when it is said, (ver. 17) "For this same purpose I have raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth;" whether by the phrase, *raised thee up*, be meant, as some suppose, *his recovery* from the effects of the preceding plague, which had been inflicted *on his person* and his people; or as others understand it, his being exalted to high power, and placed in a situation to act so important a part; in either case, there will be no reference to his final personal destiny. For how did God actually show his power in him, and make him the instrument of his glory? It was by giving him the opportunity to act out his character, by allowing full scope for displaying the incorrigible obstinacy of his disposition, and by then inflicting upon him exemplary punishment, for the instruction and warning of mankind; thus making him the instrument of promoting some of the best purposes of heaven, in the free and voluntary exercise of his power.

I should have passed by what is said (p. 72) on the doctrine of Reprobation, as expressing no other sentiment than what all Unitarians, as I believe, hold on the subject, but that I think it calculated (unintentionally I am persuaded as respects the writer) to mislead the

reader, as to the opinions of the Orthodox on that point. Dr. Woods has in fact given us, not as he professes to do, the *doctrine* of the Orthodox, as to the decree of Reprobation; but only his *opinion of the character of the doctrine*. He says, "it is the determination of God to punish disobedient subjects *for* their sins, and according to their deserts." Now this, I observe, is not a statement of the orthodox doctrine, but his opinion of the character of that doctrine. What it belongs to him to state and defend is, not an opinion upon the subject, which he holds in common with all Christians, but that, by which the system he defends is distinguished from others. That opinion I will now state in the language of one of the most approved symbols of Calvinistic faith; and it is such as follows very clearly from his own statement of the counterpart of the doctrine. "The rest of mankind," i. e. all but the elect, "God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his *glorious* justice." Again, "Others, not elected, though they may be called by the ministers of the word, and may have some common operations of the spirit, yet they never truly come to Christ, and therefore cannot be saved; much less can men, not professing the Christian religion, be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, and

the law of that religion, which they do profess: and to assert and maintain that they may, is very pernicious, and to be detested." *(Westminster Confession.)*

I am very willing to believe that the doctrine, as thus stated in the orthodox confessions, does not make a part of Dr. Woods' faith; though I am unable to perceive with what consistency he can reject it, while he retains the other parts of the system that are connected with it.

If the doctrines of original hereditary depravity, absolute personal election, effectual calling, and special irresistible grace be true; that of reprobation, as stated above, follows of course, and must be true also. Whether it be that Dr. Woods, with a fair and inquiring mind, actually shrinks from this doctrine, because he finds it cannot be defended consistently with the moral character of God: or only thinks it desirable to keep out of view a feature of Calvinism, which shocks our moral feelings more than any other; in either case, I deem it an auspicious circumstance, a favourable omen. Men will not long continue to hold an opinion, after it has got to cause a painful struggle with their moral feelings, such as to dispose them to endeavour to keep it out of sight. They will not suffer themselves to be long encumbered with that, which they are unable to defend or unwilling to avow. Besides this, it cannot fail to open the eyes of men to the difficulties of the other parts of the system, which are intimately connected with this, which necessarily flow from it, and are in fact no better supported by Scripture nor by reason than this.

LETTER V.

Following the arrangement adopted by Dr. Woods, the next subject to which I am to call your attention is that of the Atonement. It is a doctrine on which great stress is laid by orthodox writers generally. The author of the Letters addressed to Unitarians says, "If there is any one doctrine of Revelation which the Orthodox distinguish in point of importance from all others, it is the doctrine of Atonement." It must accordingly be thought, that the importance of having clear conceptions and just views on the subject will bear some proportion to the importance of the subject itself. After such an introduction, therefore, to a letter devoted expressly to the discussion of that subject, it was certainly reasonable to expect a distinct statement of the orthodox explanation of the texts of scripture, in which it is supposed to be taught, and a defence of the interpretation by which those texts are understood to express the meaning that is assigned to them. More especially was this to be expected of one, who complains that the opinions of the Orthodox are misrepresented, and who, in their name, disclaims the opinions, which are attributed to them. But in this expectation I am disappointed. There is much complaint of misrepresentation, but I find no distinct statement in what the alleged misrepresentation consists, nor what are the precise opinions maintained by the Orthodox on this subject. I am able to collect but a very imperfect

and indistinct idea, what the scheme, which claims to be Orthodox on this subject, is. It is asserted, that the language used by orthodox writers on this subject, like that used by the sacred writers, is highly figurative, (p. 86, &c.) that it is not to be understood literally, that it does not mean, what it seems to express. It would have greatly assisted us, and possibly put a period to all controversy on the subject, had the writer seen fit to explain the figures, and give the true interpretation of the metaphors, which it is complained have been so misunderstood, and have thus laid the foundation for misrepresentation.

The first charge of misrepresentation is, that the author of the Sermon makes it a part of the orthodox system, "that God took upon him human nature, that he might pay to his own justice the debt of punishment incurred by men, and might enable himself to exercise mercy"—"that he might appease his own anger toward men, or make an infinite satisfaction to his own justice." The unfairness alleged in this representation is, that it does not recognize the distinction of persons in the Deity, which is maintained by the Orthodox, and it is implied, that if no such distinction do exist, the representation would not be liable to objection, for no objection is made to it on any other ground. It was incumbent then on Dr. Woods, not merely to assert this distinction as an article of the orthodox faith, but to explain *what* it is, and to show its foundation in the language of scripture. The former he has declined, as not being within the scope of

our limited minds, (p. 84) the latter, as not falling within his purpose (p. 85) in the discussion of the subject. But until both are done, I can see no ground for complaining of the absurdity charged upon the doctrine. It is a legitimate and necessary consequence of the orthodox faith, that Jesus Christ, whom the Father sent into the world, is the same being with the Father who sent him; that Christ, who interposed and made an atonement for sinners, is the same being with that God, who, it is alleged, (p. 65) "would never have saved them without such an interposition." It was the same God, the same being, who sent, and was sent, who made the atonement, and whose anger was appeased by the atonement, who made satisfaction to offended justice, and whose justice was satisfied. It is not enough to assert, (p. 64) that "the Father and the Son are *two* as *really* as Moses and Aaron, though not in the same sense, nor in any sense inconsistent with their being one." It belongs to him, who asserts this, to state intelligibly, what is the nature and import of the distinction here intended; to explain in what sense *two*, and in what sense *one*. No man knows better than Dr. Woods, that until he has done this, he has done nothing to the purpose. He uses words without meaning, and merely casts a mist, where he is bound to shed light.

The next imputation on the orthodox faith, which Dr. Woods endeavours to remove is, that it conveys to common minds the idea, that "Christ's death has an influence in making God placable, or merciful, in

quenching his wrath, and awakening his kindness towards men." Now to vindicate the system, and those who support it, from this charge, it was necessary to show, that the language in which the doctrine is expressed and enforced by the Orthodox, is not calculated to produce this impression. But has this been done? By no means. The contrary is frankly admitted. It is conceded that the literal sense of the orthodox writings amounts to this. It is *asserted* indeed, that the doctrine of the Orthodox is the very reverse of this, "that the mercy of God, not the interposition of Christ, was the origin and moving cause of the work of redemption;" (p. 68) "that the mercy or placability of God could neither be produced nor increased by the atonement of Christ." These are noble, correct, scriptural views. We are delighted to find on this point an opinion so highly important, in exact coincidence with that of Unitarians, and one to which they attach a very high degree of importance. We are glad too to find a strong sensibility expressed to the honour of the divine character, and horror at the thought of an opinion, so derogatory to it, as that which is attributed to the influence of the language they use on the subject. But why then does he go on to defend the use of that language, instead of correcting it? Since it is admitted not to be the language of scripture, and that understood literally it does convey the ideas objected to; that it does make the impression at which so much horror is expressed, does express a doctrine acknowledged to be false and unfounded;

why is it not given up? Especially as it would, on this point, put an end to all controversy. And why complain that the opinions of the Orthodox are misrepresented, when it is acknowledged that the opinions attributed to them are the literal and obvious meaning of the language they employ?

It is to little purpose to say, that the figurative language used on this subject, though not the same, resembles that employed by the sacred writers in reference to the same subject. Dr. Woods admits that the language of the sacred writers is highly figurative. He admits too that such boldness of metaphor is peculiar to the Eastern, and particularly to the Hebrew idiom; (p. 88) and that it is not so consentaneous to our language. (p. 99) Why, then, will orthodox writers use it without explanation, when it serves to mislead readers and hearers who are not aware of this character of the Eastern languages; and lead them into so great an error? And if orthodox writers, instead of explaining the metaphors, so that their true meaning may be understood, "for the purpose of strong impression," use them as if they were to be understood literally; and not only so, but further sanction that interpretation by the use of other similar language of the same literal import; especially if they charge Unitarians with denying or explaining away the doctrine for the very reason, that they explain the language in question as figurative; can he be surprized that the Orthodox should be supposed to hold the opinions, which the language literally expresses?

Could it be imagined by a plain, honest man, under these circumstances, that while this strong, impressive language is constantly used and insisted on, something very different is all the time meant from that which strikes the ear? And, let me ask, does it enter into the minds of common hearers of such language, that, correctly interpreted, it expresses no ideas, which would be "objected to by Unitarians?" (p. 92) It is to be hoped that in future the opinions of Unitarians on this part of the subject will be viewed with less aversion, when we are told from so high authority, that "the language used by orthodox writers is to be understood as highly figurative; that, taken literally, it would impute a character to God, which would excite universal horror; but understood according to the legitimate principles of interpreting metaphors, it teaches the simple truth, that the death of Christ was the means of procuring pardon, or the medium, through which salvation is granted." (p. 93) Dr. Woods is right in supposing, "that no objection will lie in the minds of Unitarians," against the doctrine thus expressed. It is the very manner of expressing the influence of the Atonement, which has been adopted by unitarian writers.

Dr. Woods proceeds to the notice of several other modes of expression, the use of which by the Orthodox he supposes to have been misunderstood, in a similar manner, and from the same cause, the misinterpretation of figurative language. When it is said that Christ bought us, redeemed us by his blood; when he

is said to have paid our debt, to have satisfied divine justice, to have redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, and that our sin was imputed to him; when these and other figurative forms of expression are employed to set forth the design and influence of Christ's death, we are told "they are to be interpreted as metaphorical language, according to the nature of the metaphors used, and that against the literal sense, there are many objections." (p. 95) So far, there will be no controversy on the part of Unitarians, and it gives us no small satisfaction, that we have here a ground upon which we can stand together. And we are not without hope, that agreeing in this principle on which to proceed, we shall gradually approach nearer together in the result, till there shall no difference remain worth contending about.

But when Dr. Woods proceeds to explain the figures, he seems to have fallen into the same error "of mixing a degree of the literal sense with the metaphorical," which he afterwards mentions, and to which he traces some important mistakes, into which other writers have been led. To perceive this you have only to compare together the passage, (p. 94) in which he professes to explain what is meant by our being bought, redeemed, our debt paid, and divine justice satisfied; with that (p. 96), in which "the notion, that if Christ has made a perfect atonement and satisfied divine justice, those for whom he has done this are no longer under the same obligations to obey the law, and punishing them for their sins would no

longer be just, is attributed to something of a literal sense being applied to the figurative language of Scripture and of orthodox writers. And it is admitted, that "if Christ paid our debt, or the price of our redemption literally, as a friend discharges an insolvent debtor, or purchases the freedom of a slave by the payment of money; it would certainly be an unrighteous thing for us to be held to pay our own debt, or to suffer the evils of servitude." For in the passage referred to, this is the very representation that is made. "As the debtor is freed from imprisonment by the friend who steps forward and pays his debt, so are sinners freed from punishment by the Saviour who shed his blood for them." The payment is as literal in the one case as in the other; and I see not how the consequence, consistently with what is admitted above, is to be avoided. The same may be said with respect to the other terms. The consequence is not to be evaded, if our redemption by Christ means, as is there stated, "his delivering us from the punishment of the law by suffering an evil, which, so far as the ends of divine government are concerned, was equivalent to the execution of the curse of the law upon transgressors." (p. 94) The ends of the divine government are answered, the demands of the law are fulfilled. It has no farther demands. When Christ has done and suffered that which answers the ends of justice in the divine government, the necessity of punishment, so far as those ends are concerned, is superseded. The sinner then is free; exempt alike from obligation, and

from danger of punishment. The debt is paid; justice is satisfied; the ends of government are answered by the voluntary substitute. These consequences certainly follow from the manner which Dr. Woods has adopted of explaining the figurative language of the sacred writers.

But the language in question certainly does admit of a fair and unstrained interpretation, which leads to no such consequences. We are declared to have "redemption, the forgiveness of sins, by the blood of Christ." It will help us to the true interpretation of this language to attend to the use of the word redemption by the sacred writers in other analogous cases. Literally to redeem is to relieve from forfeiture, or captivity, or slavery, or to rescue from punishment by the payment of a price, and the price thus paid is the ransom. When, by a price paid by some friend, a captive is restored to liberty, or the punishment of a criminal is remitted, whose life was forfeited to the law; in each of these cases there is a redemption in the original meaning and literal sense of the word. In the same manner also, if "Christ delivers us from punishment by suffering an evil, which was equivalent, so far as the ends of the divine government are concerned, to the execution of the curse of the law upon transgressors," (p. 94) that is a literal redemption, and that and the other correspondent terms, such as *bought* and *ransomed*, are applied, and are to be understood, not in a metaphorical but a literal sense. And here I cannot but observe, that the error complained of, that of

mixing a literal with the metaphorical sense of such phrases, consists, not as intimated, (p. 95) "in the manner of reasoning upon them," but in the interpretation of the language itself.

Now it is not difficult in this case to trace the passage of the term in question from its original literal meaning to its metaphorical use. For as the deliverance from captivity or punishment was the principal thing, and the price paid as a ransom only a secondary consideration in making up the complex idea of redemption, it is easy to see how the term came to be used to denote the principal thing alone, where this accessory circumstance was wanting; and thus any kind of deliverance, by a very common change in the use of language, was called a redemption. Examples occur in the sacred writings as well as in our constant use. The deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage is called a redemption, and God is said on this account to be their redeemer, to have redeemed them from the house of bondage, and out of the hand of Pharaoh the king of Egypt.

But how was this redemption effected? Was a ransom paid as the price of their deliverance, as an equivalent for their services, as a consideration, for which their oppressors were to let them go? Let the sacred historians and prophets answer this question. (Exod. vi. 6) "I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments." (Deut. ix. 26) "Destroy not thy people, which thou hast redeemed through thy greatness, which thou hast

brought forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand." (Neh. i. 10) "Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power and thy strong hand." The nation of Israel then was redeemed, not by a ransom paid to their former oppressors, as the price of their emancipation, but by the mighty power and strong hand of Jehovah, stretched forth in those signs and wonders in Egypt, in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness, by which the Egyptian monarch was compelled to suffer their departure, by which they were protected and avenged, when pursued by their oppressors, and were conducted in safety to the promised land.

The term is applied also in a similar manner to the deliverance of that nation from the Babylonian captivity. (Micah iv. 10) "Thou shalt go even to Babylon; there shalt thou be delivered; there the Lord shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies." It is applied in many instances also to the deliverance of individuals from danger, captivity, slavery, or any great calamity; and the propriety of the term is sufficiently maintained, where something important is done, though nothing is literally paid, to procure the deliverance.

These examples of the use of this term may lead us to some just notions of its meaning, as applied to express the benefit we receive, when it is said we have redemption by the blood of Christ. It is not, that his death was a price literally paid, either to God, to satisfy the demands of vindictive justice, or to the

enemy of God and man, as the purchase of our release from his power. He was our redeemer in the same sense, in which God was the redeemer of the children of Israel ; and he redeemed us by his blood, as they were redeemed by the mighty power, and the strong arm of the God of Israel. As God was the redeemer of Israel by the miracles of Egypt, so Christ was our redeemer by those miracles which proved him to be a messenger and teacher from God ; by those instructions and that example, which were to remove our ignorance, and deliver us from the slavery of sin, and bondage of corruption ; by those high motives to repentance and holiness, which are found in the revelation of a future life and righteous retribution ; and especially by the confirmation his doctrine and promises received, and the persuasive efficacy given to his example, by his sufferings, his voluntary death, and his resurrection. He was our redeemer by doing and suffering all, that was necessary to effect our deliverance from the power of sin, to bring us to repentance and holiness, and thus make us the fit objects of forgiveness and the favour of heaven.

This view of the subject will enable us to correct an error, into which we are liable to be led by language, which we frequently meet with ; as when it is said in the Letters to Unitarians, that " when Christ is said to pay our debt, it is simply signified, that by means of his sufferings, he delivers us from punishment." (p. 94) Christ delivers us from punishment not *directly* by his sufferings. It is not that his sufferings are in

any sense a substitute for ours. It is not that satisfaction is made by his sufferings to divine justice, so that the sinner escapes, because "there is no further need of punishment." It is not that our sin was so *imputed to Christ*, that he "suffered, in some sense, as he would have suffered if our sin had been really imputed to him," and that we are directly in consequence of this vicarious suffering exempted from the punishment. But his sufferings are the means of delivering us from punishment, only as they are instrumental in delivering us from the dominion of sin. They are the grounds of our forgiveness, only as they are the means of bringing us to repentance, only as they operate to bring us to that state of holiness, and conformity to the will of God, which has the promise of forgiveness, and qualifies us for it.

There is another term also used by the sacred writers to express the efficacy of Christ's death, which admits of a satisfactory explanation somewhat similar to that which has been given of *redemption*, and is to be understood as having passed to a similar metaphorical sense. The whole of *that*, by which the benefits of redemption are procured for us, whether it be the active obedience, or the sufferings and death of Christ, or both together, is spoken of as *a sacrifice*. (Heb. ix. 26) "He appeared to put away sin by the *sacrifice* of himself." The meaning of this is rendered perfectly intelligible, and is freed from the insuperable difficulties that attend any explanation, in which is contained "a mixture of the literal with the metaphori-

cal sense," by attending to a change from a literal to a metaphorical sense of the term *sacrifice*, similar to that, which has been noticed in the terms *redeem* and *redemption*.

A *sacrifice*, in its primitive meaning, is an offering made to God, as an acknowledgment of dependence, as an expression of gratitude, or for the expiation of sin. It is thus applied to the various offerings appointed in the Jewish ritual. But as the effect to be produced is the principal thing, and it is of little comparative importance in what manner it is produced, and by what circumstance or act it is brought about; any other act, by which a similar effect is produced, though no proper sacrifice be offered, is familiarly called by the sacred writers *a sacrifice*. We find the term thus applied to prayer and thanksgiving. (Psalms cxli. 2) "Let my prayer be set before thee as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice." (Psalms cxvi. 17) "I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving." (Heb. xiii. 15) "By him let us offer the sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of our lips." It is applied to a holy life. (Rom. xii. 1) "that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God." It is finally applied to an act of kindness and relief. (Phil. iv. 18) "I have received the things, which ye sent, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God." It is by a use of the term similar to what we find in these examples, that sacrifice is applied to whatever was done by Jesus Christ for our benefit, especially to the labours and mortifications of

his life, and the sufferings that attended his death; and that he is said to have "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

It may further help us to correct notions on this subject, to be reminded of what a change the word Atonement itself has undergone. This term is now more used than any other to express the popular doctrine of an expiation for sin procured by the death of Christ, a satisfaction made to divine justice, the Deity thus rendered propitious, his anger appeased, his mercy conciliated, and forgiveness obtained for those, for whom this atonement was made.

But it is evident, I think, that this was not the original meaning of the word. It occurs but once only in the New Testament, (Rom. v. 11) "By whom we have now received the atonement." And in that case it is translated from a word, καταλλαγη, which in every other instance is rendered *reconciliation*. The same is undoubtedly the meaning of the word also in this place. And we have reason to think, that it was understood to be its meaning by the translators, and that they meant to use the word *atonement* in that sense only. This is rendered probable by the formation of the word itself. It is a compound word, and in some early English writers the composition of the word is indicated, and thus its meaning pointed out in the manner of writing it, *at-one-ment*, *at-one*. Atonement then expressed the condition of being at one, in a state of agreement, reconciliation; and to atone was to produce reconciliation, to bring parties to agreement, so that they shall be at-one.

Dr. Johnson has mentioned two instances of this use of the word in a writer of the next age preceding that, in which our translation of the Bible was made.

> "He and Aufidus can no more atone,
> Than violentest contrariety."—*Shakspeare's Coriolanus.*

That is, can no more agree, be reconciled, be at one. Again,

> "He seeks to make atonement
> Between the Duke of Gloster and your brothers."

That is, to produce a reconciliation between them, to bring them to agreement.

Now, when we thus consider the change of meaning, which this word has undergone, from expressing simply the state of agreement, the fact of a reconciliation, to express that, by which the agreement is produced, the reconciliation is effected; we find in the use of the word itself no support of the doctrine it is usually understood to express. The term has evidently a different meaning as used by St. Paul, and probably as understood by his translator, from what it has in modern books of controversial theology.

According to the explanations which have now been given, of the language of the New Testament on this subject, it will be seen, that those Unitarians who reject the popular doctrine of the Atonement, yet attribute an important efficacy to the sufferings and death, as well as the instructions and example of Jesus Christ, in procuring pardon and salvation. But this efficacy consists, not in their appeasing the anger of God, and disposing him to be merciful, but in their moral influ-

ence on men, in bringing them to repentance, holiness, and an obedient life, and thus rendering them fit subjects of forgiveness and the divine favour. The sufferings and death of Christ are thus represented as being not in our stead, but for our benefit; and intended to render the forgiveness of sin consistent with "the honours of the divine law, the character of the lawgiver, and the interests of his moral kingdom," (p. 102)—not by satisfying justice, but by subduing the spirit of rebellion, restoring the authority and power of the law, and making men obedient subjects.

And these explanations meet in a satisfactory manner the true meaning of the two texts, which Dr. Woods has introduced for the purpose of illustrating (p. 101) the "bearing which the death of Christ has on the moral government of God, and *how* it secures mercy to penitent sinners." According to this view of the subject, "Christ was made a curse for us," not in our stead and as our substitute, but for our benefit. And his being made a curse for us redeemed us from the curse of the law, from the punishment due to us as transgressors of the law, by its influence in bringing us back to repentance and subjection to the law. And when this was done, the sinner reconciled to God, brought to repentance, subjection to the law, and a life of holiness, the purposes of God's moral government are answered, its authority is supported, his law is vindicated, "God is justified, is seen to be just, is perceived to have a regard to justice, in justifying him, who believes in Jesus." It is seen that in ex-

tending pardon to the penitent believer, he has not yielded up the authority of his law, nor subjected his government to contempt.

The question which Dr. Woods here asks himself, (p. 102) "what hindrance there is in the way of God's showing the same favour to transgressors as to the obedient," is incorrectly stated, so as to give a deceptive view. The question is not, whether God can consistently with his character of moral governor, and the honour and safety of his government, show favour to *transgressors*, but whether he can extend forgiveness to the *penitent*, to those who have ceased to be transgressors, and have returned to their allegiance. The answer to this question would be very different from what the other requires. None of the consequences, which it is readily admitted must follow on *that* supposition, would have any place on *this*. God's readiness to show favour to those who repent and return to virtue, does not show, "that the authority of the law is set aside, and that no distinction is made between virtue and vice." Nothing indeed can show in a stronger light than this, God's love of virtue, and desire to encourage it by encouraging the first return to it. No other expedient which the wisdom of God could devise, certainly not that which consists in an atonement by the substitution, either literal or figurative, of the sufferings of an innocent person in the place of the guilty, will show better than the necessity of repentance and holiness and their efficacy in order to forgiveness and the divine favour, "that God

does and forever will make a distinction between holiness and sin."

I have next to make some remarks on the defence of the orthodox faith against the objection, that it "lowers the value of Christ's sacrifice and robs his death of interest;" because consisting, according to this scheme, of a divine and human nature united together, the human nature only could suffer and die. So that, instead of the infinite atonement made by the sufferings and death of an infinite being, it is in fact only the sufferings and death of a man. The defence is made on the common ground, of the "human and divine nature in Christ constituting but one person, so that all his actions and sufferings belong to him *as* one person." As this is the only defence that is, and the only one that can be set up, let us examine a little its value and force. It is admitted, that if the premises are true, the conclusion does follow; if Jesus Christ is both perfect God and perfect man in one individual person, the defence is complete.

But in the first place I remark, that the possibility of two distinct intelligent natures making but one person, has never been shown to the smallest degree of satisfaction; especially of two natures so distinct and distant as the divine and human, a finite and an infinite mind. No Trinitarian can deny, that in Jesus Christ are two perfectly distinct minds, two perfectly distinct, intelligent natures, as distinct as any two intelligent beings can be. But two distinct minds, two distinct intelligent beings, with each its separate consciousness,

knowledge, capacity, will, and action, cannot be other than two distinct persons. But all these the trinitarian doctrine attributes to Jesus Christ. Separate consciousness, for the divine nature by the supposition was not conscious of any of that suffering, by which the atonement was made. Separate knowledge, for it is alleged, that the divine person knew that, of which the human person was ignorant. Separate capacity, for the human nature of Christ could increase in wisdom and knowledge, while the divine nature, being omniscient, was incapable of increase. Separate will, for the human person most earnestly prayed for that to take place, which it could certainly be no wish of the omniscient mind should take place. Separate action, for while the human nature of Christ was limited to the labours only of a man, and confined to a narrow space, the divine nature was extending its influence to all beings and events, and producing its effects over worlds and systems throughout the universe. It is impossible for any reasoning to show more clearly, than this simple statement, the absolute incredibility of this. But this is not all. The identity of person is not only shown to be impossible, upon the trinitarian hypothesis. The only ground upon which some of the strongest objections to the trinitarian doctrine, that part of it, which consists in the supreme Deity of Jesus Christ, can be evaded is, by the assumption of two distinct persons in Jesus Christ. By assuming that he spake, and acted, and suffered, and was spoken of in two different characters. And this assumption has been

made, as far as I have seen, universally by trinitarian writers, not in words indeed, but in fact. "*Here* it is asserted, no argument lies against his divinity, for he is speaking not as God, but as man. Of *this* indeed he was ignorant as man, but he knew it as God, and *this* he might truly say he was unable to do as man, though as God he could do all things." This, I observe, is the answer on which Trinitarians have rested, and it is the only one they have offered to all those texts, and they are very numerous, in which inferiority to the Father, limited knowledge, and limited power are expressed or implied. And this goes on the supposition of two distinct persons, and is utterly absurd on any other supposition. It is indeed a palpable contradiction to say, that the same person knows and does not know the same thing at the same time, can do and cannot do the same thing at the same time. And this contradiction, and worse than trifling, is attributed to the Saviour in some of his most solemn declarations, by the supposition in question. With these brief hints I am willing to leave the reader to make up his judgment, "how far the views of the Orthodox in this case are capable of being defended in a satisfactory manner."

I would gladly have passed unnoticed what I find on the last page of the Letter respecting the Atonement, as it is unpleasant to be obliged to express the censure, to which I think a charge of so serious a kind, as is there brought against those, who reject the doctrine of the Atonement, is entitled to. This subject,

it seems, is one, which it is dangerous to discuss, and on which it is not safe even to inquire. For certainly, if the rejection of the doctrine is in itself "a plain indication of the disposition of the heart, and a proof of a temper of mind, which is in total contrariety to the humble spirit of Christian faith," it is not a subject on which it is safe to trust ourselves in speculating. The only safety is in believing without inquiry, receiving implicitly without examining. For if we allow ourselves to inquire, the result *may* be, that we shall reject, and rejection will indicate "a disposition of heart, inconsistent with the humble spirit of Christian faith."

But this, I am persuaded, cannot have been the intention of the author of the Letters. The expressions must have been used in haste, without well considering their import and bearing. It cannot have been his design, to deter those whom he addresses from examining the evidences of a doctrine, respecting which Christians have been so little agreed, and which has been so variously understood and explained, by those who receive it.

A doctrine which we cannot deny, without incurring the charge of wanting the humble spirit of Christian faith, and about which it is therefore unsafe to allow ourselves to inquire, we have certainly a right to demand to find either distinctly and intelligibly expressed in the scriptures, or clearly stated and explained in the writings of those, who propose them as essential parts of the Christian doctrine. But where, I ask, are we to

look for a clear and distinct statement of the orthodox doctrine of Atonement? The genuine doctrine of Calvinism is indeed stated by the early writers of that school in a manner sufficiently clear and intelligible. But every feature of that is denied as a misrepresentation of the orthodox faith. We are told that the language of the orthodox, like that of the scriptures, is metaphorical, not to be understood literally; and I in vain seek for such an explanation of the metaphors, as to enable me to understand what is the distinct doctrine, which is intended to be maintained. A fleeting and shadowy image is presented to the view, which eludes every attempt to fix its shape, and dimensions, and features. And can it be, that my inability to receive a doctrine, expressed in words, of which I am only told what they do *not mean*, and not what they do, is to be regarded as "an indication of a disposition of heart and temper of mind, which is in total contrariety to the humble spirit of Christian faith?"

There are some other sentiments in this paragraph also, which must not be passed without notice. It is asserted, "that God, having sent his Son to be a propitiation, has told us, that we must rely upon his atoning blood, as the *sole ground of forgiveness*." I would ask where God has told us, that "the atoning blood of Christ is the *sole* ground of forgiveness."

I find the prophet Isaiah, without any reference to any kind of atonement, referring the forgiveness of sin solely to the mercy of God, by which he is ready to accept reformation and a return to virtue. (Is. lv. 7)

"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." I find David, in the depth of his sorrow and distress in the consciousness of deep and aggravated guilt, by which he had incurred severe tokens of the divine displeasure; in pouring forth his humble supplications for pardon, placing his hope, in no sacrifice, or atonement, but solely in the mercy of God, and the evidence he should give of true repentance. (Psalm xli. 1, 16, 17) "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions."...."Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." I find John the baptist announcing the approach of the kingdom of heaven, with the call to repentance, and intimating nothing else as requisite, preparatory to being the fit subjects of it, but that men should "repent," and "bring forth fruits meet for repentance." (Matt. iii. 2, 8) I find Jesus Christ himself declaring, (Matt. vi. 14) "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." And I find it the object of one of his most beautiful and touching parables (Luke xv.) to teach his followers, not that God demands with unrelenting severity full satisfaction "in the atoning blood and perfect righteousness" of another, as the foundation of hope, and ground of forgiveness; but proclaiming the

essential mercy and placability of our heavenly Father, and his readiness, not only to receive and restore his penitent children, but to meet with joy the first workings of ingenuous sorrow and a sense of guilt, and the first symptoms of a disposition and wish to return to duty. "When he was yet a great way off, the Father had compassion on him, and ran to meet him." To this compassion and reconciliation he was solely moved, as far as we are informed, by the return of the penitent to a sense of his guilt and his duty; "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son."...."This, my son, was dead, and is alive again, he was lost and is found." I find it was the prayers and alms of Cornelius that "came up into remembrance with God," and that "in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is declared to be accepted with him." (Acts x. 4, 35)

These declarations, and numerous others of the same import, must surely have been out of the mind of the writer, when he asserted, in the words I have before quoted, "that God has told us, that we must rely on the atoning blood of his son, as the *sole* ground of forgiveness."

I must take leave also to correct some other expressions, standing in close connexion with this. It is implied in a manner not to be misunderstood, in the paragraph in question, that Unitarians, or those who reject the doctrine of the atonement, "hope for heaven on the footing of their own virtue or good works," (p. 105) that

they "think themselves entitled to future happiness on their own account, and rest their hopes of heaven on their own goodness." But is there no alternative between "relying on the atoning blood of the son of God, as the *sole* ground of forgiveness," and relying on our own merit, as the *sole* ground of acceptance? Unitarians, as far as I know, and as far as I can learn from their writings, are equally distant from each of these extremes. Their dependence is wholly on the mercy of God, for they believe that all men, on account of their actual sin, stand in need of mercy, and are wholly incapable of meriting salvation, and claiming it as a matter of right; *that* mercy, they believe, is promised to all who repent: yet that the salvation of the best of men is of grace, and not of debt, what they cannot demand as a right, yet may claim on the ground of the divine promise. A promise, too, not in consideration of satisfaction having been made by the vicarious suffering of a substitute, but originating in free sovereign mercy, and contemplating the change of character implied in repentance, as alone a sufficient reason for this exercise of it.

But though Unitarians, in rejecting the orthodox doctrine of atonement, do not maintain the opinion attributed to them of the worth and sufficiency of human merit; yet they will certainly not acquiesce in the opinion, so strongly expressed by the author of the Letters, of the entire worthlessness of all the works of righteousness and good dispositions of men. They think such expressions equally inconsistent with truth,

and of pernicious tendency. For if human virtue be thought of no value, and of no estimation in the sight of God, the motive for its practice is weakened, if not destroyed. We shall feel little interest in seeking high attainments in that, which is of so little consideration, or is so offensive, that it must not be named in the presence of God. But let me ask, where we are to find the inhibition so confidently asserted. Where "has God taught us, (p. 105) that no works of righteousness which we have done, and no accomplishments or dispositions which we possess, must ever be named in his presence?" I find instances innumerable, in which the reverse of this is expressed in a very clear and unequivocal manner. It is expressed by Paul, when he said, (Rom. ii. 6, 10) "God will render to every man according to his deeds," and has prepared "glory, and honour, and peace, for every man that worketh good." And as he thus believed that the good deeds of good men were regarded with approbation and complacency by their Maker; so he was certainly not aware that it was either criminal or improper to *name them in his presence*, when he so exultingly appealed to the course of his past life, and expressed his so strong assurance of the future rewards of virtue; (2 Tim. iv. 7) "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day."

Such a thought must have been far from the mind of our Saviour, when he directed his disciples to plead

their good deeds in their supplications to God for his mercy; (Matt. vi. 12) "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," with the express assurance, that this plea will not be disregarded, "for if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." Such a thought seems wholly inconsistent with the declaration, "That the son of man will come in the glory of his Father, and will then reward every man according to his works;" (Matt. xvi. 27) for such a declaration implies, that the works of men are of some account in the mind of Him, who will be their judge, are to be brought into solemn account, and to furnish the grounds of the decisions of the great day.

I would request you also to compare with the assertion under consideration, "that God has taught us that no works of righteousness which we have done, and no accomplishments or dispositions, which we possess, must ever be named in his presence;" the parable of the talents in the xxv. chap. of Matthew, and the representation of the final judgment in a more direct form, which immediately follows it. To whom and upon what ground, in the former case, was the eulogy pronounced, and the reward assigned; "Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things?" And in the latter, to whom was addressed the welcome, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world?" It was in each case the faithful, the

humane, and the obedient; and in each case it was the good deeds they had done, "the good dispositions they had manifested, the fidelity with which they had used the talents entrusted to them, the kindness with which they had conducted in the relations in which they were placed, that recommended them to the approbation of the judge, and procured for them the rewards he had to distribute. No allusion is made to a "perfect righteousness, which God has provided for them" to supersede their own personal righteousness, or to render it valueless. Indeed nothing can be more clear, than that if it be of no value, of no account, and not to be named in the presence of God, it is not worth our pursuit, and those are the truly wise, who place their whole dependence on the worthiness of Him, who was righteous for them, and trouble not themselves about the attainment of personal righteousness, which being of no account, can be of no use.

I know that this consequence will be rejected with abhorrence by every serious believer in the doctrine; but I know, too, that it does not follow with the less certainty from it.

LETTER VI.

The subject to which I would next call your attention is that of *divine influence;* the discussion of which occupies the Xth letter of Dr. Woods. Upon this subject we must keep carefully in mind the distinction between the general doctrine, and that which is peculiar to Calvinism. It is with the latter only that we are concerned as a subject of controversy. To the indistinctness and obscurity, which arises from confounding them together, we owe much of the difficulty, in which this subject is usually involved.

As to the general doctrine of divine influence, I observe, there is no controversy. It is implied in the government of providence, in the acknowledgment of dependence on God, and in every prayer. We may suppose it to be direct and immediate, or only such as reaches us through the instrumentality of those means, by which common effects are usually produced, and thus not distinguishable from the common course of nature. None, I suppose, will deny the possibility of a direct access to the human mind by him, who gave being and all its powers to that mind; and the reality of it will always be a fact, depending like every other fact upon evidence; to be received or rejected, as the evidence is perceived to be satisfactory or not.

It will not, I presume, be pretended, that the direct influence of the spirit of God upon the mind is of such a nature, that men can be conscious of it at the time,

so as to distinguish it with certainty from the natural operations of the mind under the influence of external circumstances, and the variety of motives, which are presented to it. There can then be no evidence of it in any particular instance. Our proof of the doctrine must be drawn, not from experience or observation, but solely from those texts of scripture, which are supposed to assert it; and those are to be subjected to just rules of interpretation, in order to ascertain, whether that, and that only, can have been the meaning of the spirit that dictated them.

But without any immediate and direct influence upon the mind, the most important effects may be produced, and changes brought about within us, by a variety of instruments and means, in a manner analogous to that, in which all the great purposes of God are accomplished in the natural and moral world. God is to be acknowledged, his hand is to be seen, the operations of his spirit appear in all the events that take place. Yet not a direct and immediate agency is to be perceived. Instruments and means are employed, but the hand that employs them is unseen. Not seldom a long and circuitous train of them, the connexions and combinations of which it is not in our power to trace, conceals from our view the spirit that guides, and the power that effects the whole.

Nor is it only great events, and the accomplishment of great purposes, that we are to trace to the agency of the spirit of God. It extends not less to the common provisions and constant occurrences of life; to the food

by which our life is supported, and every provision by which it is made comfortable. These are the gift of God; not directly, not independently of our exertions, nor without the exertions of others, but by employing them both. God is also the preserver of our lives, and is to be so acknowledged in all the common, as well as the uncommon exigences of our being. Not, however, by immediate acts of power, and a direct agency, is this done, but by the instrumentality of an infinite variety and complicated system of means. Of these means, our own exertions, and the assistance of others, constitute an essential, and a principal part. If they are neglected or withheld, the protecting care of heaven is withheld. We perish. A miracle is not wrought to save him, who takes no care to save himself.

It is in a similar manner, by instruments and means, not by a direct action upon the mind, that the spirit of God produces its great effects in bringing men to repentance, holiness, and virtue. Among these, the most important are the instructions of the holy scriptures. "The word of God (1 Pet. i. 23) is the incorruptible seed, by which men are born again." Whatever good influences are produced by it, are influences of the spirit of God. The same may be said of christian institutions, religious assemblies, public worship. The usual course of providence, but especially deviations from it in remarkable events and uncommon phenomena, are means for accomplishing the same purposes. The same also is to be said of the priesthood, religious

rites, and prophetic office under the former dispensation, and the christian ministry, and the whole system of written and oral instruction under the present. And those who are thus employed in "converting sinners from the error of their ways, and turning many to righteousness," are represented as "ambassadors of Christ." They are his agents, act in his stead, and whatever effects are produced, they are the proper fruits of the spirit, and may be considered as the work of that spirit, which projected the great scheme, and which provides for and directs its execution.

Now, were there nothing more direct and immediate, than those influences, which have now been mentioned, there would be enough to answer to most of the language of the Bible on the subject; enough to give a fair and important meaning to all the texts alluded to by Dr. Woods. (p. 107) Those are the instruments and means by which God is constantly "working in men both to will and to do; creating in them a new heart and a new spirit; opening their eyes, drawing, turning, renewing, strengthening them, helping their infirmities."

All that is said to show, that a divine influence upon the mind *may* be consistent with human liberty and proper activity, is to no purpose; for neither the reality of a divine influence, nor its consistency with human liberty and activity is denied. That is not the question in dispute between Unitarians and Calvinists. The question is, whether the doctrine of divine influence, in the peculiar sense in which it is held by Cal-

vinists, is consistent with human liberty and activity. Nor is it whether they affirm it to be so, but whether it can be shown to be so in reality.

It is in vain that Dr. Woods has blended together and confounded the general doctrine of divine influence, which is held by Christians in common, with the peculiar doctrine of Calvinism respecting special irresistible grace. In vain has he softened down the offensive features of the system, and explained away, or endeavoured to give an unexceptionable meaning to the terms *irresistible, overpowering, invincible,* used by the Orthodox in relation to the subject. The import of these terms is to be found in the known and avowed doctrines of Calvinism, as they are stated by the most approved writers, and in the Confessions of Faith deliberately drawn up by Councils, and received by churches, which profess to make the Calvinistic faith their standard.

Now according to these, "All those, whom God hath predestinated to life, *and those only,* he is pleased in his appointed time, effectually to call by his word and spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ."—"This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone; not from any thing at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the holy spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call."—"Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regene-

rated and saved by Christ, so also are all other elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word."—" Others not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the word, and may have some common operations of the spirit, yet they never truly come to Christ, and therefore cannot be saved. Much less can men, not professing the Christian religion, be saved in any other way whatever, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, and the law of that religion they do profess." *(Westminster Confession.)*

In the above extracts from an instrument of high authority, we have a clear and distinct statement of the orthodox doctrine respecting that influence of the spirit, by which regeneration is effected; and by which alone men can be brought out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, and brought into a state of salvation. It is an influence confined to the elect; granted exclusively to those, who are predestinated to eternal life; granted to them also in a perfectly arbitrary manner; not being on account of any thing foreseen in them, still less on account of any thing already in them; since, until it takes place, they are, according to this scheme, in a state of sin and death, wholly inclined to evil, and indisposed to all good. In those, upon whom this influence is exerted, its effects take place without any agency or cooperation of theirs, for they are wholly passive in it. It is the irresistible and unaided work of the spirit of God, which man can

do nothing either to assist or to prevent. In all those, who are the subject of it, it is effectual, and their regeneration and final salvation are sure. Those to whom this influence is denied, or from whom it is withheld, are not elected; and they can never be regenerated, and consequently their salvation is impossible.

It will be objected, perhaps, that the Orthodox, though they receive in general and substantially the doctrines contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechism, yet they are not satisfied with them in all respects, and do not subscribe to all their language.

To this objection they have an undoubted right, and Dr. Woods, as their representative, has a right to be judged upon a fair construction of the language, which is used in the Creed of the Theological Institution with which he is connected; and that which he has himself used, as far as he has proceeded in giving a statement and explanation of the doctrine.

But, little I think will be gained by this toward relieving the doctrine, which he means to maintain, from the charges which are brought against the orthodox system on this point.

In the following extracts from the Creed of the Theological Institution at Andover, I think you will find every important idea expressed or implied, that is to be found in the passages before given from the Westminster Confession. "By nature every man is personally depraved, destitute of holiness,

unlike and opposed to God, and previously to the renewing agency of the divine spirit, all his moral actions are adverse to the character and glory of God; being morally incapable of recovering the image of his Creator, which was lost in Adam, every man is justly exposed to eternal damnation; so that except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;....God, of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity elected some to everlasting life....no means whatever can change the heart of a sinner, and make it holy....regeneration and sanctification are effects of the creating and renewing agency of the holy spirit."

A cursory reading of Dr. Woods' Letter on this subject might lead to an impression of something short of the doctrine expressed in these extracts; but the following sentence, taken in the connexion in which it is used, and in connexion with the other doctrines defended in his Letters, will be found, I think, to express or imply all that is contained in the fuller, and more naked and undisguised statement of the Westminster Divines. He is speaking of the meaning of the words *irresistible, overpowering*, as used by orthodox writers, in reference to the divine influence upon the minds of men, when he says, (p. 116) "What the nature of the disorder is, God knows, and is perfectly able to apply a suitable and efficacious remedy. Now, when this almighty Physician kindly undertakes the cure of our souls, the obstinacy of the disorder yields; its resistance is taken away; that is to say, the heart is effectually cleansed from its pollution; love of sin,

enmity to God, pride, ingratitude, and selfish, earthly desires are subdued, and man is induced to love God, and obey his commands." He had before explained the orthodox faith in general by saying, (p. 108) "We believe, that all virtue or holiness in man is to be ascribed to the influence of the divine spirit, and that without the effectual agency of the spirit, man would have no holy affections, and perform no acts of holy obedience."

Now what is the disorder, to which the efficacious remedy is to be applied; and for which, as we shall see, there is no other cure? If we look back to the Vth and VIth letters of Dr. Woods, we shall find it described. It is a state of entire moral corruption, in which every man is born into the world, and in which every man continues until he is renewed by the holy spirit. It is, that men are by nature, that is, as they came first from the hand of the Creator, destitute of holiness; not only so, but subjects of an innate moral depravity, from the first inclined to evil, and while unrenewed, their affections and actions wholly wrong. This is the disease, as to its nature and extent.

Passing to the next letters, VIIth and VIIIth, we are told to whom, and on what ground, a cure is applied. Those, who are to be delivered from this moral bondage, this original state of depravity, to be regenerated, renewed, and saved, are selected from the mass of mankind by a sovereign act of the divine will, without any thing in them, as the reason why they were chosen, rather than the others, who are passed by, left to remain in sin, and to perish forever.

Being thus elected, thus predestinated to eternal life, they become the subjects of the efficacious, renovating influence, under consideration. And when this "almighty Physician undertakes the cure, the disorder yields." He cannot be defeated. He cannot be resisted. The fact then is, that all, whom God undertakes to renew, all to whom he applies that effectual influence, which is to subdue the obstinacy of the disorder, are in fact renewed. The love of sin and enmity to God are subdued, and they are brought to the love of God and obedience. And this effect is produced, because he who knows the disorder has known how to apply a remedy; and has applied one, which must produce a cure.

It follows, then, that this remedy has been applied to *no others*. Those who are not renewed have none of this influence employed upon them; for if they had, they also would have been renewed; since this influence is efficacious, cannot be resisted, cannot be defeated. Their failure then is for the want of that, which is granted to the others, and without which it was impossible for them to be renewed and saved. "All virtue, all holiness in man is to be ascribed to this efficacious influence; without it man would have no holy affections, and would perform no acts of holy obedience." (p. 108) Those, then, who have holiness and virtue, have it solely in consequence of their having this influence, which makes them, and cannot fail to make them holy; and those who have none, but remain unholy, sinful, enemies to God, are destitute of it solely because they

have not that influence, which, if they had, could not fail to produce the same effect in them, which it has produced in others. This is but a fair and full, unexaggerated development of the doctrine, according to Dr. Woods' own statement of it. And whether it be not in every point the same as that which is more clearly stated in the Westminster Confession, every one can judge.

From the doctrine thus stated, Unitarians, I believe, generally dissent, and maintain a very different opinion on the subject. They dissent, because they think it inconsistent with all the representations we have in the scriptures of the moral character of God, and with the condition of man, as a free and accountable being; —inconsistent with all those texts, which complain of the sins of men; because, by the supposition, they act only according to the nature given them, and could not act otherwise without assistance and influence, which are not given to them;—inconsistent with all the commands of the Gospel to believe, repent, be renewed, and to love God with the whole heart; since they have no ability to do any part of this, till almighty power is exerted to make them willing; and it is equally impossible for them not to do it, when this power is exerted;—inconsistent with the sincerity of all exhortations, encouragements, and promises to the exertions of men, since it supposes them incapable of willing to perform either of these acts; that it is not of themselves to will any thing good, but they depend for it on an influence, over which they have no control, and which they can do nothing to procure.

Taking this doctrine of an efficacious influence, without which there can be no holy affection, and no act of holy obedience, in connexion with the whole scheme of doctrine, of which it makes an essential part; we are unable to reconcile it with the paternal character of God, or a righteous government, or to perceive how it can consist with a moral accountability. We are unable to see how the character of God can be vindicated, in creating beings with a nature totally depraved, inclined only to evil, demanding of them holiness, which they are utterly unable to exercise, without an irresistible influence in renewing their hearts, and giving them right dispositions and desires; which influence he grants to some, and denies to others, without any difference in them as the ground or reason of the distinction; and punishing those for not exercising this holiness, to whom he had never granted the assistance, without which it was never possible to them. And we are equally unable to see how those could be accountable for their actions, and the subjects of reasonable blame for their unholy and wicked lives, who were brought into being with hearts totally corrupt, inclined to evil, and evil only, and from whom that efficacious renovating influence has been withheld, without which it was never possible for them to be renewed, to "have any holy affections, or to perform any acts of holy obedience." The sinner seems upon this scheme to have a perfect apology to offer for his continuing in sin; a complete and satisfactory excuse for every defect and for every crime, however numerous, and however great.

It may be useful to give you a distinct statement of the several points, in which our views upon this subject are at variance with those, which we find advocated by Dr. Woods. In the first place, a different account of the moral nature of man, and his character and disposition, as he comes from the hand of the Creator, leads to a different opinion correspondent to it, of what is necessary, in order to his becoming holy, and a fit subject of the approbation and favour of the Author of his being. Not seeing in him a nature wholly corrupt, inclined only to evil, and an enemy of God, we perceive no necessity for an almighty, irresistible influence to be employed for the purpose of producing an entire change of nature, opposite inclinations, dispositions, and course of action from those, to which he was directed by his natural constitution. Believing him to possess faculties and affections, equally capable of a right and a wrong direction, neither morally good nor bad by nature, but equally capable of becoming either, we see a moral discipline under which he is placed, adapted to such a nature, such capacities, and such dispositions. The influence and agency of the spirit of God is to be acknowledged in the whole of that discipline which is intended to improve, exalt, and perfect our nature, or to correct any wrong tendencies it may have acquired, and restore it to a right direction, and its previous purity.

In this light are to be viewed all the means and the motives of religion, the institutions of society, the course of providence, events calculated to lead to

reflection, to produce seriousness, to give us just views of our nature, condition, duty, prospects, and hopes; what we are, and what we ought to be, or are designed to be. Whatever is adapted to subdue the power of sin, to control the bad passions, and to bring us to the love of holiness, and the practice of every virtue. In all this the agency of God is to be acknowledged, as the purposes of God are to be perceived. Not a direct and immediate agency, but such as we see exercised in every thing else through the universe; God bringing about his ends by a variety of means, and employing in them the subordinate agency and instrumentality of his creatures.

It is by such means, that the spirit of God produces its great moral effects, operates on the minds and hearts of men, reconciles them to God, works in them to will and to do his good pleasure. These influences are distributed to men in very unequal measure, and with infinite variety, as to kind and degree. The impartiality of the common parent is manifested, not in employing the same means with all, and exerting upon all the same influence, but by rendering to all according to the manner in which they act under the influence that is employed upon them, whatever that may be, as to kind and degree; not in giving to all the same number of talents, and of the same value, for use; but rendering to all according to the use they make of their talents, whether few or many. And here they find room for the particular and perhaps direct and immediate influence of the spirit upon those, who

have made a good use of common privileges, upon the principle, that "to him that *hath*, more shall be given." More shall be given to him, who has made a good use of that which he has, whether much or little.

Accordingly, Unitarians generally do not reject the notion of a direct and immediate influence of the spirit of God on the human mind. They believe that there may be circumstances of great trial, strong temptation and peculiar difficulty, that call for extraordinary assistance, and that those who have manifested a disposition to make a good use of the ordinary means afforded, will have further aid suited to their exigences, and sufficient by a proper use to answer to their necessities. They suppose also that any extraordinary assistance will be granted only to those, who ask it; that it will be granted to previous good disposition, and a sense of need and dependance. That God will give the holy spirit to them who ask, to them who have already right feelings, are sensible of their weakness and wants, and ask the mercy of God to supply them.

LETTER VII.

I now follow Dr. Woods in calling your attention to a few remarks on *the influence and moral tendency* of the Unitarian compared with the Trinitarian and Calvinistic scheme; premising however the caution, that we must not confound, in our examination, as is too apt to be done, the moral tendency with the effects actually produced; and that even when this error is not committed, too much weight is not to be given to any argument drawn from such a comparison on either side. The reason is, that mankind are less influenced in their conduct by their speculative opinions, and the character of their faith, than we are ready to imagine. Were we purely intellectual beings, governed wholly by reason, there would be no such uncertainty or fallacy in our deductions. We could calculate with certainty how men would act, by knowing what they believed; and on the other hand, what was the character of their faith, by their course of life. But men have also passions and affections, on the one hand; and these not only serve to corrupt and pervert the understanding, but where they fail to do this, they yet are able to overpower the will, so as to lead them to act in opposition to reason and faith;—and on the other hand they have conscience and a moral sense, which, however the understanding may have been blinded, or misled, or perverted, will sometimes preserve them in a right course of conduct, in defiance of an absurd or a corrupting faith. Still there is a general influ-

ence of right views and a pure faith, which is not inconsiderable, nor uncertain.

But when we come to speak of the practical influence of different forms of christian faith, we are to take into our consideration, that there are certain great principles, and those the most fundamental, and influential upon the conduct of life, which the several sects of Christians hold in common. So that great as the difference is between the Unitarian and the Trinitarian faith; on account of the fundamental principles held in common, the difference of their practical tendency is less, probably, than ardent and zealous partizans on either side are ready to imagine. Still, however, it is believed that the difference in several respects cannot be very small.

I am ready to accede to the statement implied in what is said by Dr. Woods, pp. 135—141; that the practical influence of a scheme of faith will bear some proportion to the exhibition it gives, "of a being of infinite perfection as the object of worship; a moral government marked with holiness and righteousness throughout; and the manner in which mercy is exercised toward offenders under this government."

These are the great points, upon which the Unitarian and Calvinistic doctrine are at variance, and with this difference in view, Dr. Woods endeavours to show the favourable influence of the latter above the former in several respects.

In the first place, with respect to *love to God.*

Now it will be sufficient to remark on this point, that the practical influence of a doctrine will depend, not

on the words in which it is expressed, but on the images, which are presented to the mind. However we may speak in words of the perfect justice, benevolence, and mercy of God; our feelings and affections will wholly follow the images, in which he is presented to us in the dispositions towards his creatures, and the actions respecting them, which are attributed to him. If those are such, as in any other being would be thought arbitrary, or unjust, or cruel; it will be in vain for us to speak of them in words, that express all the kindness and benignity of the paternal character. The question then will be, not what are the epithets which the two systems apply to God, for they both apply the same; but what are the actions they attribute to him, what the images, under which they present him, what the principles and measures of his government? In these respects enough has before been said to show how the comparison will stand.

Love to Christ, and the value at which we estimate the benefits we receive through him, will depend on our view of the nature and value of those benefits, and not at all on the rank he holds in the scale of being. Unitarian views indeed ascribing to him only what he claimed himself, derived excellences, and a subordinate agency, will not allow us to give him the supremacy of affection, any more than the glory, which was due to God only. It teaches us to love him, to be grateful to him, and trust in him, as him who was appointed by the Father to execute his purposes of benevolence; and who voluntarily did and suffered all that was

necessary to procure for us the forgiveness of sin, reconciliation with God, and eternal life. These are benefits, with which nothing that is done by any other finite being can bear any comparison; they are such as entitle him to affection, and gratitude, and trust; such as we owe, and can owe to no other being, but to "his Father and our Father, his God and our God."

Unitarians are unable indeed to express these sentiments in the language applied by Dr. Woods, p. 145. Such expressions of confidence and trust they can apply to God only. They have but one object of supreme trust and dependence. Were they to make Jesus Christ that object, they would fear to incur the rebuke, which the prophet received from the angel before whom he fell down to worship, "See thou do it not, I am thy fellow-servant, worship God." I am ready therefore to answer to the questions, with which Dr. Woods closes the paragraph which relates to faith in Christ, (p. 145) "Does the Unitarian system teach any thing like this? Does such a faith spring from the principles which it inculcates?" to say no! Most of what is there said, Unitarians would apply to God, but not to Christ. We find nothing in the Bible to justify us in transferring our supreme confidence and trust from God to Christ. It is accordingly the power and wisdom and goodness of *God*, which inspire us with humble and joyful hope; and which put our hearts at rest respecting the important concerns of the creation. It is to *his* care, that we cheerfully and entirely commit our interests, temporal and eternal. It is in *him* that

we trust for all that is necessary to purify our hearts, to guide and protect us during our pilgrimage, to comfort us in affliction, and to give us peace and triumph in the prospect of death. In these great interests and concerns, we cannot consent, and we do not find ourselves taught, to leave our heavenly Father wholly out of the account.

The tendency of any scheme of doctrine to produce *the dread of sin, and a watchful care to obey the divine precepts*, will depend essentially on the view it presents of the rewards and punishments prepared for men in another life, the heaven it provides, and the hell it reveals. Now it is not a little remarkable, that Dr. Woods should claim an advantage, in point of moral influence, to the orthodox faith, on the ground that "it contemplates a state of higher perfection and purer and more elevated enjoyment, than the Unitarian describes." (p. 146) And "that the contemplation of a future reward, *to be obtained by virtuous efforts*, must evidently tend to excite those efforts, very much in proportion to the greatness and excellency of that reward."

For, besides that the claim of higher perfection and greater purity is without any foundation to justify it; upon what ground can he speak of a future reward to be obtained "*by virtuous efforts?*" The reader has not forgotten, that the sinner has no encouragement to virtuous efforts: "That no works of righteousness, and no accomplishments or disposition, must ever be named in the presence of God.....That the only righ-

teousness, which is to be the foundation of hope to men is a perfect righteousness which God has provided..... That we must rely on the atoning blood of Christ as the sole ground of forgiveness."

Unitarians may be allowed to speak of the motives to virtuous efforts arising from the future rewards to be obtained by them ; but with what propriety can the *Calvinist* do this, who believes, that the future condition of men is determined from eternity by an irreversible decree ; that by nature they are totally depraved and inclined only to evil; that they remain so till brought out of that state by regeneration, and that regeneration is effected only by the special irresistible influence of the spirit of God, granted only to the elect, and to them, not on account of any disposition or efforts of theirs, which have any tendency to produce or to procure it ?

And as to the influence of the different views of future punishment ;—it might at first be thought, that the advantage were on the side of those of Calvinism ; but there are two considerations that convince me to the contrary. For, in the first place the punishments as well as the rewards provided by that scheme, are administered on the principles of a sovereign, unconditional election ; the desert of punishment, and consequently the punishment itself, not being subject to any human efforts, but following necessarily the divine decree. Bad men may be expected to avail themselves of the plea of a moral inability, which, to all practical purposes, is in fact the same as a natural

inability, or physical coercion. They may be expected to go on quietly in the course of vice in the persuasion, that if they are not predestinated to holiness and eternal life, no efforts of theirs can avail them ; and if they are, God will, in his own time, draw them to him, by his effectual, irresistible grace ; that nothing, which they can do, till thus regenerated, will have any tendency to bring about this effect, or prepare them for it ; on the contrary, that they are as likely, I believe they are sometimes told more likely, to be thus arrested by sovereign grace in the full career of wickedness, than when using endeavours to recover themselves out of the hands of satan by their own strength. This reasoning, and I cannot see that it does not proceed fairly on the acknowledged principles of Calvinism, must check instead of encouraging the efforts of wicked men to disentangle themselves from the snare of the devil.

In the second place, we are to look for the efficacy of punishment and its moral influence in preventing sin or reclaiming men from it, not to the degree of its severity and duration only, but to its certainty, and the evidence brought home distinctly to the minds of men of its certainty. Now if you endeavour to enhance the fear of punishment, by representations of its severity or of its duration far disproportioned to what can be the apprehension of the demerit, to which it is to be applied ; if you carry it beyond the bounds of probability, that the threat will be executed ; if it be such, that to a reflecting mind, it is impossible it

should be executed by a just, and good, and merciful being, the Parent of the creation; you weaken its effects as a motive, you lose in probability, and the firmness of faith, more than you gain in the force of fear. You excite a vague and indistinct terror and dread; but so mingled with incredulity, arising from a natural and unconquerable sense of the essential kindness and benignity of the Author of nature, as to impair, if not destroy its practical effects.

The surest and highest, the purest and most permanent influence will be that, which arises from such views of the future punishment awaiting the wicked, as are consistent with the character of a Sovereign of the world, who has nothing vindictive in his nature, who adjusts punishment to the degree of demerit, who inflicts it solely for the purpose of promoting holiness, and accomplishing the purposes of his moral government, and only to the degree which these purposes require, and so long as they require it.

From these considerations, I am persuaded that the moral influence of the views of future reward and punishment, maintained generally by Unitarians, is far more certain, and powerful, and salutary, and purifying, than that which is the result of the Orthodox views on this subject. And I am persuaded of this by another consideration still. It is this—The virtue that is produced by cheerful views, and by the contemplation of kindness, benevolence, and mercy in God, is of a more pure, generous, and elevated kind, than that which arises from cold, austere, and gloomy

views, and the contemplation of severe, unrelenting, vindictive justice, and the execution of eternal wrath.

Unitarians believe that the representations in scripture of the future punishment of the impenitent wicked are, for the purpose of impression, highly figurative; but they believe that the figures, like all others used by the sacred writers, are intended to mean something, something of vast moment; that in degree and duration it will be such, as is calculated to produce the highest practical influence. In either respect we can have clear and distinct conceptions only to a certain degree. All beyond that, therefore, can add nothing to the effect.

Dr. Woods proceeds to a comparison of the different influences of the systems in question, as respects *reverence for the word of God.* To show that Unitarians have little reverence for the scriptures, and treat the sacred writings with little respect, he asserts, (p. 148.) That, "the grand maxim of the Polish Socinians was, that *reason is our ultimate rule and standard*, and that whatever in religion is not conformed to this, is to be rejected. This maxim, as they understood it, gave them perfect liberty to alter or set aside the obvious sense of the bible, whenever it did not agree with the deductions of reason. Unitarians, in general, have, with more or less decision, adopted the same maxim." The impression intended here to be made on the reader must be, That "Unitarians, generally think themselves at perfect liberty to alter or set aside the obvious sense of the bible, whenever it does not

agree with the deductions of reason." Dr. Woods has not seen fit to refer us to his authority for the assertion, as respects the Polish Socinians. This it was his duty to do, in laying against them a charge of so serious a nature, that the reader might be able to judge of its justice. What authority he may be able to produce, I know not. But I presume it must have been derived from a passage, which I shall subjoin, which is found in the Racovian Catechism, which contains a summary of the Socinian doctrines, as drawn up by the celebrated Polish Divines. But if this passage be the only authority to which he will appeal, the charge is made with less care, than were to have been expected of one, so frequent and loud, as he is, in his complaints of the misrepresentations and unfairness of adversaries. The passage is this—

"By what means may the more obscure passages of scripture be understood?

"By carefully ascertaining in the first instance, the scope, and other circumstances, of those passages, in the way which ought to be pursued in the interpretation of the language of all other written compositions. Secondly, by an attentive comparison of them with similar phrases and sentences of less ambiguous meaning. Thirdly, by submitting our interpretation of the more obscure passages to the test of doctrines, which are most clearly inculcated in the scriptures, as to certain first principles; and admitting nothing that disagrees with these. And lastly, by rejecting every interpretation, which is repugnant to right reason, or involves a contradiction."

The reader is now requested to compare this with the assertion of Dr. Woods, and to judge of the fairness of the representation. The principles of interpretation, as here stated, are such, as no Divine of any school will at the present day call in question. They are such as Dr. Woods himself, I will venture to affirm, continually applies in practice. The difference between him and the Polish Divines is only as to the cases, to which the principle is to be applied, and not as to the principle itself. A thousand instances may be brought, in which Dr. Woods will apply the principle without hesitation. No one will reject with more decision than Dr. Woods the obvious meaning of all those passages, numerous and frequent as they are, in which bodily organs and human passions are ascribed to God. He will exercise his reason in the interpretation of all those passages, which will teach him to set aside as inadmissible, the plain, obvious, and literal meaning of the words that are used.

Luke xiv. 26. Our Saviour says, "If any man hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Dr. Woods, I trust, will be slow to insist on the plain and obvious sense of this text, as the true meaning of it. He will doubtless make reason his guide, in its interpretation; and applying his knowledge of oriental idioms, will set aside, as utterly inadmissible, the literal and obvious meaning of the words; not suspecting that he is thus exposing himself to the harsh censure from some less

enlightened and liberal interpreter of scripture, of taking the liberty to alter or "set aside the obvious sense of the Bible."

Matt. xxvi. 26, 28. Our Saviour says, "This is my body,—this is my blood;" and John vi. 53. "Verily, verily I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." Dr. Woods, I suppose, will be as much shocked as any Polish Divine of the whole Socinian school, or any English or German Unitarian, at the idea of adopting the obvious sense of these expressions, as the real meaning of him who uttered them. Nor will he much regard the honest Catholic, who, pressing him with the literal meaning of the words, charges him with perverting the scriptures; and destroying their authority by thus subjecting them to reason in their interpretation. But why thus shocked, and why not adhere to the literal sense with the Catholic, unless the principle be admitted, that reason is to be employed in the interpretation of scripture? Unless calling to its aid all the resources of learning, experience, and common sense, it may authorize us to set aside the obvious sense by supplying us with proof, that, in any given case, the obvious sense cannot be the true sense? This is quite a different thing from such an arbitrary alteration of the word of God, or setting aside its true meaning, as is implied in what Dr. Woods has laid to the charge of the Polish Socinians and modern Unitarians.

But who, let me ask, is the man that manifests the truest reverence for the word of God? Is it he who indolently and carelessly takes the meaning that first presents itself, however absurd, or contradictory, or even impossible that may be; or he who, when the meaning that first presents itself is attended with difficulty or doubt, sets himself with patient and laborious study to ascertain, whether it be the meaning intended by the writer; a meaning, which if it be the word of God, will certainly contain neither an impossibility, a contradiction, nor an absurdity? Is it he, who without suffering his reason to judge in the case, accepts the meaning, which has been assigned to it in an age of ignorance and superstition, and which ecclesiastical authority has sanctioned, enforced, and perpetuated; or he, who using his own reason, instead of trusting that of another, applies all the helps that time, and industry, and learning have furnished, to the discovery of its true meaning?

We not only avow the principle, that reason is to be our guide in the interpretation of Scripture, but we declare that we know not a higher act of disrespect and irreverence to the word of God, than he is guilty of, who, rejecting the free use of reason in its interpretation, exposes it to contempt by attributing to it communications, which could not have been made by the same God, who is the author of our reason. We profess none of that loyalty of faith which consists in implicit subjection to the creed of a master; which is expressed by degrading and undervaluing our

reason or refusing its use, and thus becoming prepared to receive absurdities, contradictions, and impossibilities for divine instructions. We think it to be doing no honour to our sacred books to be ready to believe both sides of a direct contradiction, because we think that we find them there. We are satisfied, from the very circumstance that it is a contradiction, or an absurdity, that we must have misunderstood what we there read. We suspend our faith, and apply ourselves with all the aids that reason, learning, industry supply to ascertain the source of our error, and to discover the truth. We believe that Unitarians, by doing this, have done much toward relieving our religion from articles of faith, and the scriptures from opinions attributed to them, which they never taught, which have been a reproach to our religion, and the occasion of its being rejected by many; who would gladly have received all that it has taught, had it been presented to them unmixed with the absurdities and impossibilities, with which they have seen it associated in popular creeds.

In order to estimate the relative tendency of the two systems, as respects *benevolent action*, whether in relation to the common interests of life, or that highest kind of it, which is directed to *the spread of the gospel, and the salvation of men;* we have only to compare together the views which have been given of the leading doctrines of the two systems; particularly as they relate to the character and dispositions of the Author of nature, his moral government, and the moral

nature of man, and his condition, as a state of trial and probation for an endless being.—To this comparison I confidently invite you, in the assurance that no further illustration is necessary; and that you cannot fail to be convinced, that no opinions on these subjects can be better calculated, than those which we maintain, to purify and exalt our best affections, and to strengthen the motive to every kind of benevolent exertion.

I am persuaded too, that upon a fair comparison, Unitarians will not be found in fact to be behind other Christians in their benevolent exertions. Neither in Europe nor America are they liable to any peculiar reproach for the want of activity and engagedness in promoting humane and benevolent designs. In accomplishing all the great purposes of christian charity, as relates both to this and another life, it is believed they have taken their full share of interest, and have contributed their full share of exertion with their persons and their property.

In proportion to their numbers, no denomination of Christians has furnished more distinguished examples of ardent and disinterested zeal, personal sacrifices, and active exertion in the cause of truth, for the advancement of pure religion, and to promote humane and benevolent objects. None have contributed more largely to some of the most valuable institutions, by which the present period is distinguished. They have taken an active and leading part in promoting the great ends of the Bible Society, and the Peace Society.

In each of these they have united together with Christians of all other denominations. Their exertions and their contributions to the purposes of christian charity have been less the subject of public notice, than equal and similar exertions of others, for reasons which are obvious. They have not been exclusive. They have not been made separately. They have usually been thrown into a common stock. They have had no desire to be distinguished from other Christians,—have been willing to act with them, and wherever the object proposed, and the means for attaining it were such, as they could approve, to unite with others in promoting it. They have done, what every one, who regards the great interests of religion more than personal reputation, or the advancement of a party, ought to do. They have exercised their judgment in selecting the objects to which they should lend their aid; not always choosing those, which would excite the admiration of the world, or contribute most to give consideration or power to a sect, or serve to distinguish them from others. They have accordingly been less engaged than some other denominations of Christians, in projecting and supporting foreign missions, which though the most splendid and imposing, they have thought to be one of the least useful of the achievements of christian charity. For this apparent backwardness and lukewarmness, with which they are sometimes reproached, reasons may be assigned, which are not inconsistent with their taking as deep an interest in the cause of Christianity, and the salvation of their fellow-

men, as others; and being ready to contribute as much and as cheerfully to extend the knowledge, the influences, and the blessings of our holy faith to all lands and to every people.

The imaginary cases, which Dr. Woods has allowed himself to state, (pp. 154, 155) are wholly gratuitous. He would have spared himself and the reader, had he reflected for a moment, that a Unitarian might invert the picture he has drawn, and it would be entitled to the same consideration as that, which he has presented; that is, to none at all. Were it even in his power, instead of a mere supposition, to produce an example, he must perceive, that it would prove nothing to the purpose, for which it was alleged; since that would not be inconsistent with an opposite example at the same time. Were it a fact, *instead of a mere imagination*, that an individual Unitarian by becoming orthodox had become more zealous and engaged, both in personal religion and in benevolent exertions; and that an individual Calvinist, on the other hand, had lost much of his piety and zeal in becoming a Unitarian; it would not prove that others might not experience an equally salutary change of character in passing from the orthodox to the unitarian faith,—or one equally unfavourable by passing from the unitarian to the orthodox. I may have as good reason for believing that the one event would take place, as Dr. Woods has for the probability of the other. And our opinions are each alike of no value.

I have observed that satisfactory reasons could be assigned, why Unitarians are not seen, as distinguished from others in those "remarkable movements," which in Dr. Woods' opinion "present the only prospect we have of the salvation of the world." (p. 153.) Some have had the opinion, in common with intelligent and pious Christians of other denominations, that little hope was to be entertained, of any important benefit from missionary exertions in heathen countries. So little success has attended all endeavours in modern times to extend the bounds of Christendom by missions for the conversion of barbarous pagan nations, that some have been ready to think, that no hope was to be entertained from human exertion, until it should be accompanied, as it was in the apostolic age, with some visible supernatural aid; until those, who are sent forth to carry the Gospel to the heathen, should have the power given them to propose its doctrines with the same authority, and accompanied with the same miraculous evidence, as it was when presented by its primitive teachers. Nor has this opinion been confined to Unitarians.

Others again, who have had more confidence in the efficacy of human exertions, and who believe that Christianity will finally triumph universally through the instrumentality of ordinary means; have yet not been satisfied with the means they have seen employed. They have believed that direct endeavours for the conversion of the heathen to Christianity have been premature; and have been wasted by being ill-

timed and misapplied. They have thought that no permanent or extensive good was to be expected, except where the arts and some of the habits of civilized life, and some of the human literature of Christendom have been first carried, to prepare the way for its reception. They have thought that those, to whom the Gospel is sent, must be prepared to understand it and to feel its value by some previous education; and some have been disgusted, no doubt unjustly, by thinking that they saw, in the *remarkable movements* alluded to above, too much of ostentation and worldly motive; too much that seemed like a call upon an admiring world, "*Come and see my zeal for the Lord.*"

By some it has been thought, that to bring men from the grossness and absurdities of paganism to pure Christianity, the progress must be gradual. The transition is too great, and would give too violent a shock, to take place at once. They must pass to it through several intermediate steps. Light must be thrown in gradually, as they are able to bear it. Christianity is more likely to be received, if it be first introduced in forms mingled with considerable degrees of superstition; with pomp, and form, and ceremony, and even with corruptions of doctrine, which bring it nearer to the faith to which they have been accustomed. Polytheists, for example, it has been supposed, may be more easily reconciled to Christianity, and more ready to embrace it in that form, which leaves them a threefold God, or three Gods (for they will be able to understand none of those nice distinctions, which

exercise the wits of learned theologians and acute metaphysical divines on this subject,) than that, which reduces the object of human worship to a perfect unity.

With such views and such impressions, they have seen their duty, so far as respects exertions in the Christian cause, lying in a different course; not in sending Unitarian missionaries into barbarous nations, but in studies, and labours at home to purify the Christian doctrine, and restore it to its primitive state. They have believed, if the Unitarian doctrine is to be sent any where abroad, it is to the Jews, and the followers of Mahomet, among whom all attempts to introduce Christianity have been defeated by the corruptions, with which it has been accompanied; and where better success may be reasonably expected, when it shall appear stripped of those appendages, which constitute their objection to it.

Other reasons also are to be assigned for that appearance of apathy, want of interest and want of exertion, with which Unitarians are sometimes charged. As has been said before, they have never been forward to distinguish themselves as a sect from the rest of their fellow Christians. They have never united their exertions together for the purpose of establishing a separate interest. They have felt no separate interest. They have been willing to remain, as long as they were allowed to remain, mingled together with their fellow Christians, undistinguished from the general mass, throwing in their contributions both of money and of personal exertion with theirs. They have thus

contributed to swell the amount of charities and exertions, for which they have had no share of the credit.

To this course of conduct they have been induced in part by the love of peace, a desire to escape odium, and to avoid disturbing the public tranquillity and order. But neither the purity of their motives, nor the peaceful and silent course they have pursued, was sufficient to shield them from reproach. This very quiet and silence were brought against them, as an evidence of lukewarmness, and heartlessness, and indifference to the cause of religion; and their alleged inactivity was attributed to an opinion, that Christianity was of little value, and that men might do well without it.

They have accordingly found, that the reasons for their former course no longer continued; and they have changed that course. They have been convinced, that the state of things called upon them to use those exertions in the maintenance, defence, explanation and propagation of their opinions, from which only a regard for peace had hitherto restrained them; since the same peaceful and silent course could no longer shield them from reproach, nor prevent the mischiefs that they wished to avert. And now what is the consequence of this change of measures? They are reproached with that very activity and zeal, with those very exertions, which but a short time since, it was their reproach not to make.

These exertions are accompanied with the happiest effects. They have awakened a spirit of inquiry, which will go on and increase. They appear not yet, and

it may be long before it will be proper that they should appear, in some of those particular things, in which they are reproached with being deficient. They have much to do at home, before it will be in their power advantageously to the Christian cause to extend their exertions abroad. They have to awaken a livelier interest in the cause of Christianity and the progress of rational and just views of its doctrines in their own body; to excite a deeper tone of religious feeling in that part of the Christian community, to which they have access, whether from the press or the pulpit; to engage the wealthy to cooperate with them, by bringing home to their feelings, the great good they have it in their power to do, and to their consciences the solemn responsibility connected with every talent, and every opportunity and power of doing good. They have to excite literary men to give more of their studies and labours, and more of their zeal to the promotion of so great and desirable a purpose. They have to induce enlightened and liberal men, who by their professions or public stations have an opportunity of exciting a salutary influence in the community, to a more open and manly avowal of their opinions, and to unite with them in all fair, and moderate, and temperate measures, with the Christian spirit, yet with ardour and lively interest, to promote and extend them.

It is not doubted that throughout our country, a very large proportion of those men, who for their talents, and learning, and virtues have the most influence

in the community, and have it in their power to do the most toward giving a right direction to the public feeling or public sentiment, are dissatisfied with the Calvinistic and Trinitarian form, in which they have had religion presented to them; and if they have been led by circumstances to free inquiry on the subject, are Unitarians. But various causes prevent them from making a public avowal of their opinions. Among these, not the least is, usually, an unwillingness to encounter opposition and obloquy, and the loss of confidence, and of the power of being useful. It is among the encouraging prospects of the present time, that the reasons for reserve are ceasing to operate with all the force they have done in times past, and that the reluctance to an undisguised avowal of Unitarian sentiments is in a great degree overcome.

It is asked, by what motives Unitarians are influenced in their endeavours to disseminate their peculiar opinions. The answer is easy, and I think such as to justify at least all the zeal and earnestness they have yet discovered in the defence or the publication of their views of Christianity. They are earnest and active then, because they have a firm faith in the truth and the importance of their opinions, and that it is their duty to bear their testimony to the truth, and to leave no proper means untried, to cause it to be attended to, and understood, and respected. And they are fully persuaded, that the course they are pursuing in this respect, is in fact attended with very salutary effects. One, to which they attach no small import-

ance, is the well known fact, that wherever the Unitarian doctrine prevails, and the rational views with which it is accompanied, a very important portion of society, the most elevated, intelligent and enlightened, become serious and practical Christians, who, in catholic countries, or where Calvinism prevails, are oftener unbelievers, and sceptics, and treat Christianity with neglect at least, if not with disrespect.

The reason of this is obvious. Men of cultivated minds and enlarged views are often so engaged in the business, and engrossed by the interests and cares of the world, as to depend for their views of Christianity wholly on what they hear from the pulpit, and what they find in the popular creeds and catechisms, which, they take for granted, exhibit fairly to them the Christian doctrine. Finding the system as it thus presented to them, such as their understanding and moral feelings will not admit of their receiving, they reject Christianity without further examination; not thinking themselves bound to inquire into the evidence of a system of faith, which carries in itself, in their view, intrinsic marks of incredibility. When to persons of this character and in such circumstances unitarian views of the christian doctrine are afterward presented, their attention is arrested by their reasonableness, and their consistency with what the light of nature teaches of the character and government of God. They are induced to examine the claims of a religion to their faith, which is presented to them in a form, so agreeable to the reason God has given them, and to the nat-

ural notions that arise from what they see of his character and dispositions in the government of the world; and the effect of examination is a firm conviction, that the new views in which Christianity has been presented to them, are the result of a fair and just interpretation of the scriptures in which it is contained; and that the religion itself is as well supported by evidence, as it is worthy of the faith, and approbation, and affection of a wise and enlightened mind.

The time has been, within the memory of men now living, when in that class of society now alluded to, the most elevated, enlightened, and influential, in giving the tone to the public sentiment, and the direction to the manners and practice of society, infidelity and contempt for religion were far more prevalent, in this vicinity, than they are at the present day; and at that time the religion which issued from the pulpit, and which was the only faith that reached them, was Trinitarian and Calvinistic. I hazard nothing in asserting, that in proportion as those views of religion, which are generally adopted by Unitarians, have become prevalent, infidelity and contempt of religion have become less and less frequent; and our most enlightened men, with scarcely any exception, are among its most efficient friends and serious and practical professors.

I have now said all that I meant to say upon the doctrine of Christianity, as held by Unitarians, its comparison with the Trinitarian and Calvinistic faith, and its tendency and moral influence. I have

endeavoured to express myself with the most perfect freedom and plainness; yet with the decorum and respect due to the solemn and interesting subjects which have come before me, to the author of the book which I have had so much occasion to notice, and to those fellow christians, who may dissent from the opinions and views which I have expressed.

For the declaration made with emphasis by Dr. Woods at the close of his book, "that in his honest and serious apprehension, the Unitarian system *is indeed another Gospel*," I was not wholly prepared; though it is one which we have before been accustomed to hear in different forms from other sources, for which we have less reason to feel respect. We are consoled, however, with the thought, that an excommunication, though pronounced *ex cathedra*, carries not with it now the terror, which it once did. Christians will venture to judge between the rival systems, and will take the liberty to decide, each one for himself, whether the gospel, as it is held by Unitarians, or as it is held by Trinitarians and Calvinists, be *the Gospel of Christ.*

2

ANSWER

TO

DR. WOODS' REPLY,

IN A

SECOND SERIES OF LETTERS

ADDRESSED TO

TRINITARIANS AND CALVINISTS.

BY HENRY WARE, D. D.
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LETTERS, &c.

LETTER I.

Occasion of the present publication. State of the controversy. Manner of conducting it. Charge of inconsistency answered. Agreement between some orthodox and infidel writers. Another charge of inconsistency answered. Statement of the question at issue on the subject of depravity corrected.

When I published, nearly two years ago, "Letters addressed to Trinitarians and Calvinists," it was my hope not to be called upon to pursue any further the discussions, in which they were employed. But the Reply of Dr. Woods to those Letters, which is now before the public, has rendered it proper for me, I think, to offer some further thoughts on the several subjects of discussion, and remarks on his manner of treating them. I shall accordingly address to you a few additional Letters, in which I hope to be able to satisfy you, that the state of the controversy is not changed, and that the great points at issue between us remain, as they stood before. My opponent had doubtless good reason to felicitate himself as he does, (p. 6) "on the benefit he could derive from the frankness," (he might have added, perhaps, want of controversial skill and caution) of the person, with whom he was contending. Though I

trust to be able to show, that the benefit is to himself only, as an accomplished disputant, and not, as he flatters himself, to the cause he maintains. That will be found to derive less advantage from the circumstance, than he seems to promise himself.

I think it necessary, in the outset, to remind you of the state of the controversy, because you are otherwise in danger of losing sight of the points at issue, and of having your attention directed to subordinate circumstances, which are so apt, in the course of discussion, to be allowed to take their place. For this purpose I must call your attention to the origin and progress of the discussion.

The occasion, in which it originated, was a Discourse delivered by Dr. Channing at the ordination of the Rev. Mr. Sparks at Baltimore, in May 1819. A part of that Discourse, in which the doctrines of Calvinism were spoken of, was attacked by Dr. Woods, who complained that the doctrines referred to were misrepresented, professing at the same time to give a correct statement of them, as they are now held in this country by those, who assume for their system the title of Orthodoxy; and undertaking also to defend them, as constituting the true system of christianity, agreeing with our experience, and clearly taught by Revelation.

The important points of doctrine, you will recollect, which he maintained in a series of Letters addressed to Unitarians, were, *The total depravity of human nature, particular personal election, atonement by the death of Christ, and the necessity of*

special divine influence in producing holiness. Those Letters were published in the spring of 1820. In the month of August of the same year, the writer of these pages attempted an answer to them in Letters addressed to Trinitarians and Calvinists. In those letters he endeavoured to show, that the doctrines of orthodoxy, as stated by Dr. Woods, were not taught in the bible, were not supported by experience, and could not be reconciled with the moral character of God. The writer, at the same time, took occasion to state distinctly, his own particular views upon each of the several subjects in controversy.

In the book which furnishes my apology for addressing you once more in these Letters, Dr. Woods has appeared again in defence of the doctrines maintained in his former publication, and in reply to the objections, which I had urged against them. With what degree of success, you will be able to judge, after having read what he has written, and what I have now to allege in answer.

Nothing will be found, I am persuaded, which, upon a fair examination, will be thought to affect the evidence of any one of the main articles in the scheme of scriptural divinity, which I endeavoured to support in my Letters. The reader, who gives himself the trouble to make the necessary comparison of passages referred to, will perceive, without the aid of these pages, that although Dr. Woods has been able to fasten some apparent inconsistencies and absurdities, and perhaps you will think after all that can be said, some real ones upon his antagonist; they

are yet of such a nature, as not to affect at all the truth of the points at issue, but only the conclusiveness of my reasoning upon them, or still more frequently, the propriety of some term or phrase which I have employed. They serve to show, not the weakness of the cause, but that its strength has not been fully displayed; not that the Unitarian doctrines are incapable of a fair support, but that the best support has not been given them, of which they are capable.

It accordingly makes a part of my present design to show, that whatever advantage Dr. Woods may seem to have obtained in detecting apparent inconsistencies in the explanation and defence of the Unitarian doctrines, the evidence of the doctrines is not affected.

But I hope also to do more than this. I hope to satisfy you, and I think I shall be able to do it, that the inconsistencies so ingeniously detected and so faithfully displayed, are, in general, if not in every instance, apparent only; and that they will disappear upon a fair presentation of the true meaning of the passages, from a comparison of which they were drawn.

I mean not by this to intimate any unfair or dishonorable intentions in Dr. Woods. I will not allow myself to believe him capable of any intentional argumentative unfairness. I only mean, that in the discussion of religious or moral subjects for popular use, one can hardly employ words with such philosophical exactness, and so constantly guard against objection, that metaphysical subtilty

shall not be able to bring together expressions, which seem to be irreconcileable with each other. And there is certainly, at first view, something extremely imposing, and apt to make a strong impression, in an array of inconsistencies and contradictions, spread before one in strong relief and in broad characters. Our first thought is, that little reliance is to be placed on a writer, who so exposes himself. Yet, in reality, there is nothing, perhaps, upon which we have less reason to depend. For suppose, all that can be asked, the inconsistency to be as great in reality, as it seems to be; what does it prove?—not that the cause is a bad one, but only that it is unskilfully or carelessly managed;—not that the doctrine is false, but that the evidence of its truth has been less successfully stated than it might have been. But we are not usually required to admit so much as this. Such is the imperfection of language, and such the real difficulty of some subjects of speculation, that, as I have before observed, it is scarcely possible for words to be used with such accuracy and precision, and with such care, that a vigilant and acute antagonist shall not be able to discover inconsistencies, which may be so presented, as to seem of considerable importance. I could illustrate this by a hundred instances taken from the sacred writers, where we are constantly called to reconcile apparent contradictions; and where, by the fairest modes of interpretation, we are able to do it with entire satisfaction, without prejudice either to the writer or the doctrine. It would have been no difficult task to

discover apparent inconsistencies in the book, which I had occasion to notice in my former Letters. But had I pursued that course, the author would doubtless have charged me, and I know not how I could have repelled the charge, with a disposition to cavil, rather than reason; and would probably have been able to show, that a little more patient and impartial attention to the subject, or a little more argumentative fairness, would have presented to me a meaning, that implied no absurdity, and was chargeable with no contradiction.

With these preliminary remarks, I now invite your attention to the several charges of inconsistency, to which, in the book before me, I am represented to have exposed myself, in my statements of the Unitarian doctrine, and reasonings respecting it.

The first that I shall notice is contained in the passage in pp. 13 to 17 inclusive, and refers to p. 26 in the Letters to Trinitarians and Calvinists, compared with pp. 20, 31 and 41, of the same.* Upon looking at these several passages with a reference to the alleged inconsistency, my first thought was, that I might safely leave the subject without any explanatory remarks, only requesting you to read the whole of the several passages attentively; assured that you could not fail to perceive, that it only offers a remarkable instance of an appearance of inconsistency produced by a dexterous juxtaposition of separate passages, where a careful examination of the subject only is needed to show, that no real inconsistency exists.

* I refer always to the pages of the octavo edition of the Letters.

But lest there should be any readers, who may not have the patience to recur to passages and their connexion, and make the requisite examination, or may not have the means of doing it, or may be insensible of the need of doing it, not aware how liable a fair and honourable disputant, of peculiar talents, turn of mind, and habits of speculation may be to impose upon himself and thus upon his reader by his own ingenuity; it seems necessary for me to take the labour upon myself by showing where the fallacy lies in the present case, and in several others which follow.

The inconsistency with which I am charged (Dr. Woods' Reply, p. 16) amounts to this, and this only, though it is again and again brought to view, and placed in different points of light, viz. That while in the formal statement of the doctrine, which I meant to maintain respecting the natural state of man, I assert, *that man is by nature free from all moral corruption, as well as destitute of positive holiness, by nature no more inclined to sin than to virtue, and equally capable in the ordinary use of his faculties, and with the common assistance afforded him, of either;* yet, in discussing the subject, I several times say what implies, *that by their natural birth men become moral, have a moral disposition or character, which is good or holy in such a sense, as to entitle them to the Saviour's complacency, and make them heirs of his kingdom.*

Now, by reading the whole passage and applying the principles of interpretation, which we

usually apply, when we discover an apparent contradiction between two sentences of a writer of any character for common sense and consistency; you will be satisfied, that had my ingenious friend as faithfully taxed his ingenuity to ascertain the real meaning of the writer in the passage before him, as he has done to detect and present to view an alleged inconsistency, he would have saved me, himself, and the reader some waste of labour and time. For, notwithstanding what is so repeatedly insinuated, that he was at a loss what my real opinion was, and what was the position, that I meant to maintain, he will not—he cannot deny, that in the direct statement of my opinion on the subject, there is no ambiguity, no room for any reader to be at a loss, what is the precise position, which I meant to maintain. It is, as I have before stated, *That man is by nature, that is, as he is born into the world, equally free from sin and destitute of holiness, no more inclined to vice than to virtue, and equally capable, in the ordinary use of his faculties, and with the common assistance afforded him, of either.* And this position, you will recollect, is maintained in opposition to the doctrine of orthodoxy on the same subject, which is, "*That man is by nature, that is, as he is born into the world, totally depraved, inclined only to evil, and wholly incapable of any good inclination or motion, until such inclination or motion is produced by an irresistible act of the spirit of God.*"

Now, in support of my own position, and in opposition to that of orthodoxy, among other arguments, I took occasion to apply that, which is drawn

from the earliest indications of character in children. But in speaking of the innocence, gentleness, kindness, and love of truth in children, am I to be charged with asserting or implying, that *they are holy by nature*, in contradiction to the express assertion at the head of the argument? Consider only what the nature of the argument required. Dr. Woods' position is, *that human beings come into existence totally depraved, inclined only to evil.* If this be the truth, the earliest indications of character in children ought to be evil only, unmingled wickedness, sin without alloy. My position, on the other hand, is, *that human beings come into existence innocent, and without any greater bias to sin than to holiness; not inclined to holiness only, nor did I say to holiness more than to sin.* If this be the truth, the earliest indications of character will be of a mixed nature; and at an early period, as soon indeed as the child becomes capable of moral action, we shall be likely to find in its dispositions and in its character as much of that which is good, as of that which is evil. This, I endeavoured to show, is in fact the case, and that our doctrine is fully confirmed by experience. I confined myself, indeed, chiefly to the mention of amiable traits and virtuous tendencies; because those of an opposite nature, not being questioned by the orthodox, it was unnecessary to mention.

Now, as it was the object of my argument to show, that whatever early indications there are of bad dispositions or bad tendencies, they are to be attributed to other causes, and furnish no proof of

original native depravity; when I had occasion to speak of good dispositions, and good tendencies, common courtesy, one would have thought, should have saved me from the charge of asserting or implying, original native holiness, even although it had not been, as it had, expressly disclaimed. My real meaning must have been perfectly obvious to every reader. It was what the argument required, viz. that the early indications of what is good in children proves, not that they are holy by nature, but only, that they are *not totally depraved*, since, if they were, none of those indications could have existed. With this explanation in your mind, read the passage, which I have referred to, and you will perceive, that all appearance of inconsistency has vanished.

But I have not yet done with the passage. In my former publication, I had mentioned as proofs, that the nature of man is not totally depraved, *that innocence, simplicity, and purity are characteristics of early life; that veracity, kindness, good will, flow from the natural feelings, and that the infant mind early discovers affection, attachment, gratitude toward those from whom it receives kindness.* The correctness of this statement of the characteristics of early life, far from being denied by Dr. Woods, is expressly admitted. "These," he says, after quoting them, "are charming names, and *I am sensible that charming qualities of human nature are denoted by them.*" But are innocence, purity, veracity, kindness, gratitude and good will, qualities that denote a nature totally depraved, inclined only to evil? What then must be the qualities, that

shall denote a nature free from depravity? Will you say, the opposite qualities, impurity, deceit, unkindness, ingratitude, ill-will? I had not asserted, nor was it implied in any thing I did assert, that either or all of these were sufficient *alone* to constitute a holy man, or, that nothing more than these was required; but I did suppose that they made a part, and an important part of that character, which constitutes conformity to the moral law, and renders him to whom it belongs holy, and acceptible to God.

Nor did I think of comparing these qualities, as Dr. Woods has done, (p. 13) with "beauty of complexion and features, sprightliness of temper, and activity of limbs." I knew, indeed, that Hume, Godwin, and others, who hold some philosophical opinions in common with the orthodox, do, on the ground of those opinions and as their legitimate consequence, confound together physical and moral qualities, and assert, that there is as much good desert in a well formed body, as in a well regulated mind or heart; and upon the same principle, that there is no more guilt or blame-worthiness in the murderer, than in the instrument with which he perpetrates the bloody deed. But I had always supposed, that when the Orthodox were charged with these opinions, as the legitimate tendency of their doctrine of human nature, and necessarily connected with it, they would deny the charge, and consider it as a slanderous misrepresentation. And I am at once surprised and sorry to meet with expressions in the book before me, which expose the author to the charge in a manner, which I do not perceive how

he is to repel. For if there is no more good desert in innocence, veracity, gratitude and kindness, than in personal beauty, there can be no more guilt in falsehood, ingratitude, or cruelty, than in personal deformity; and he who asserts this need not hesitate to go the length of Godwin,—that the murderer is no more to be blamed than the dagger.

A charge of inconsistency of a similar nature occurs, (p. 35) which, by turning to the passage in my Letters, to which it refers, you will perceive has as little foundation as the other.

In proof of the general position, which I have before repeated, viz. *that mankind come into the world innocent and pure, objects of the complacency of the Creator, and no more inclined by nature to sin than to holiness;* no more disposed to *hate and disobey, than to love and obey their Maker,* I had urged the manner in which little children are spoken of by our Saviour and by St. Paul. *Suffer little children to come unto me—for of such is the kingdom of God. Except ye be converted and become as little children &c.* I asked, if they were depraved, *destitute of holiness*, averse from all good, inclined to evil only, enemies of God, subjects of his wrath, justly liable to all punishments, could our Saviour declare respecting them, *of such is the kingdom of God?* In this sentence the acute and vigilant eye of Dr. Woods has fixed itself on the unlucky phrase *destitute of holiness*, as implying a contradiction to what I had elsewhere said, and what my scheme every where implies, *that men do not possess by birth that character*

of personal holiness, and positive virtue, which is necessary to their being christians &c.

Now I am ready to admit, if you will insist in contradiction to the whole tenor of this passage, in which it stands, and to the main position, which I had so often repeated, and stated so explicitly, that I must have used the word *holiness* here in its technical sense, the charge of inconsistency will lie against me. And what is the consequence? Only this, that I have used a phrase, which expresses a meaning, that I did not intend to express, and which every reader, not excepting Dr. Woods himself, perceives that I did not intend. In the sense, therefore, whether proper or not, in which it was evidently used, no contradiction or inconsistency is implied.

So far as the alleged contradiction consists in the representation of little children as *belonging to the kingdom of God*, I shall not be held answerable for the propriety of the terms, as I only use the words, that were used by our Saviour. Nor do I perceive what is gained or lost by Dr. Woods in adopting the interpretation of Rosenmuller, and understanding the text to mean, not that *children belong to the kingdom of God*, but that members of Christ's kingdom must be *like little children.* For upon this interpretation, equally with the other, little children are supposed to have some qualites, which are essential to those, who are to become christians. They have then some good qualities—are not totally depraved—are not inclined only to evil.

Dr. Woods, however, endeavours to prove, that our Saviour's recommendation of children as objects of imitation to his disciples does not imply (p. 37) "that children possess any moral excellence or goodness, like that excellence or goodness of christians, which is meant to be set forth by the comparison;" because christians are in a similar manner, for the purpose of illustration, likened to sheep, lambs, doves; and it is asked, "do sheep, lambs, and doves possess moral excellence?" They are compared also, it is said, "to salt, light, and the branches of a vine." But to the whole reasoning and appeal in this passage, specious as it seems at first view, a single consideration may be opposed, which will suffice to show, that it has no weight. It is this, that every such illustration by a comparison is to be interpreted according to the nature of the subject in discussion and of the object of comparison. When christians are compared to a vine &c. we are very certain, that it cannot refer to any intellectual or moral quality in the vine, because a vine is in its nature incapable of such a quality; but are we hence to infer, that there is no reference to moral qualities, when a child is the subject of comparison, who *is* capable of such qualities? Some degree of presumption at least, that moral qualities were referred to, one would think was to be drawn from the very circumstance, that a subject was made choice of for the illustration, which was capable of moral qualities. And we should be confirmed in the opinion, that it certainly was so, if, as in the present case, the whole transaction clearly

indicated, that moral, and only moral qualities were in the mind of the speaker. Dr. Woods, however, is of a different opinion. He thinks they are not moral, but natural qualities. And he says, (p. 40) "The plain truth is, that the amiable natural qualities, which distinguish little children, are made use of to illustrate the amiable moral qualities, which ought to belong to christians." You will here doubtless wish with me to learn, what are the names of those *moral qualities* of christians, which are said to resemble, and are represented by the *natural qualities* of children. The amiable natural qualities, which, it is not denied, belong to children, are innocence, purity, veracity, kindness, gratitude, &c. You will wish to know what are the *amiable moral* qualities of christians, which these represent, and whether they are known by other names than innocence, purity, veracity, &c. You will think it also a singular concession in one, who professes to maintain the doctrine of total native depravity, that the qualities above mentioned are the natural qualities of children; that beings by nature destitute of all good, and inclined only to evil, are yet by nature kind, grateful, pure, innocent, and true; i. e. have the very qualities which, in christians, are moral qualities.

It is important for me here to call your attention to an incorrectness in Dr. Woods' statement of the question at issue on the subject of depravity; because it is a circumstance, by which the reasoning in this and the following chapters is materially affected. He says, (p. 13) "The real question is,

whether holy love to God and man is the first moral affection, which human beings generally exercise, after they become moral agents, and are expressly informed what God requires of them." Now this is so far from being the real question, that it has made no part of the question between us. It has neither been asserted nor denied; nor do I know, that the affirmative is maintained by any one. The real question at issue is a different one. It is not, whether the first moral affection be *generally holy*, but whether it be *always unholy;* not whether holy love to God and men be the *invariable* or *general* characteristic of our first affections; but whether our first affections and inclinations *be evil*, and *evil only*. You perceive the wide difference of these questions. With the former I have no concern. The latter was opposed in my former letters, as being supported neither by scripture nor experience; and it is the only point to which Dr. Woods' defence ought now to have been directed. Why he has chosen to direct it to another point, about which there has been no controversy, he will doubtless be able to say. It is sometimes the policy of inferior combatants to carry the war into a quarter, where there is no opposition. But such a motive and design cannot be attributed in the present case.

LETTER II.

Traits of early character not consistent with depravity. Appeal to experience by the orthodox—defective—partial.

I HAVE but few remarks to make on what I find in the second chapter of the book before me. One, however, that occurs upon reading the first sentence, is of some importance, and may be applied to several other passages. It is asserted, that it had been shown in the preceding chapter, "That those amiable qualities, which are really characteristic of early life, and which had been mentioned as indications of moral purity, are in fact of such a nature, that they may consist with depravity, and so cannot afford any argument at all against the common orthodox doctrine." The fallacy contained in this sentence, arising partly from the loose and equivocal use of the term *depravity*, and partly from a degree of uncertainty as to what is meant by *the common orthodox doctrine*, I apprehend is not immediately perceived by readers generally.

Now what Dr. Woods has shown is in fact only this, that the amiable qualities, admitted to be characteristic of early life, are not inconsistent with the existence of qualities of an opposite nature at an equally early period. This, Unitarians have not denied. It is expressly admitted in all my reasoning upon the subject. But if this is the sense in which he uses the word *depravity* in this place, and nothing more is meant; it has no relation to the orthodox doctrine of depravity. That doctrine relates not to the acquired *character* of children, but to their

nature, and expresses not what they actually are by practice, but what they are supposed to be, as they come into being previous to practice. Orthodox depravity is "an *innate* moral depravity, all without exception being by nature unlike and opposed to God, and all their affections and actions wholly wrong, adverse to the character and glory of God." But has Dr. Woods shown or attempted to show, that the amiable qualities really characteristic of early life are consistent with depravity in this sense? Has he shown that innocence, purity, veracity, kind affections are consistent with a *nature inclined only to evil*, and *with affections and actions wholly wrong?*

But an appeal is made to the experience of parents and christian ministers, as to the character and disposition of young children; and it is asked (p. 43) "whether, at two or three years old, they show a heart to love God supremely. Or if then supposed not capable of having correct knowledge of God and their duty, whether at four, five, six, or ten they generally show a disposition to love and worship God, or signs of cheerful, willing obedience." It were sufficient to reply here, that this statement presents a wrong view of the question at issue, which is not whether we are by nature wholly or even prevailingly disposed to good; but whether, as the orthodox doctrine of depravity teaches, we are *wholly inclined to evil*, and all our affections and actions by nature wrong, and opposed to God and his law. It is enough, therefore, if I can prove, not that children are naturally disposed to love God supremely, but that *they do not hate him supremely;*

or that there is not satisfactory evidence that they do so hate him; or even that they are not more disposed by nature to hate, than to love God, to disobey, than to obey his laws. All, therefore, that is said in this chapter of the character of children, may be admitted without prejudice to the argument. All the indications of depravity, which are there arrayed together, prove only what Unitarians have as little disposition to deny as the orthodox. I mean, that children have an animal as well as an intellectual nature; passions and appetites to allure, mislead, and endanger virtue as well, as reason and conscience to guide and restrain; a sensual as well as a moral constitution, by which they are early exposed to temptation, surrounded with dangers, and liable to fall into sin. But we affirm, that these appetites, passions, and natural affections are not in themselves sinful. They do not constitute him a sinner in whom they exist. They lead not to sin only, but are the source and the elements of our virtues as well as our vices. They are not extinguished in the best of men.

But there is further a defect in the appeal to experience, which renders entirely inconclusive any arguments that are drawn from it. A part only of her report on the subject has been stated, and I must now be allowed to supply the omission, and fill up the report, by stating what has been withheld. The experience then of every parent and instructer (p. 44) "who labours in earnest to teach children the things of religion, and to induce them to keep the divine commands, undoubtedly does find some

of their inclinations mighty obstacles to his success." But he is a most unfortunate parent, who has not also found in his children something to facilitate his success; some docility, reasonableness, and tenderness of conscience. If he has represented God to them, as he appears in his works, and is revealed in his word, in all the moral beauty and grandeur of his character, kind and merciful as well as holy and just; the benefactor and friend, as well as the righteous judge of men; he has at least as often found them ready to love and obey, as to hate and disobey the Author of their being.

But any conclusions drawn from what can be said on either side, as to the natural disposition to love God, will be to little purpose, for want of a conception or idea of God, upon which the argument is to proceed, that is common to us both; since it is not the word God, but the idea annexed to that word, that is the subject of consideration. By the Unitarian it will be regarded as no proof of native depravity, if, instead of admiring and loving, the child is shocked at the character and attributes of God, as they would be presented to its mind in a statement of the Calvinistic doctrine. On the other hand, by the Calvinist, it will be regarded as no proof of a right disposition and good moral tendency, though the child should approve and love God as soon as it is made acquainted with his character, as he is represented by the Unitarian doctrine. The reason in each case is obvious. The great question at issue between us is, whether *this* or *that* is the true representation of the divine character. We must have

recourse, therefore, to other topics of reasoning, and to other marks of a right or wrong moral disposition and early tendency. And I know not how a fairer view of the subject is to be presented, than by a comparison of what is said by Dr. Woods (pp. 45, 46) respecting the disposition of children to falsehood, pride, envy, wrath, revenge, selfishness, with what was said by me, in my former publication, of the early manifestations of the opposite dispositions and opposite traits of character; bearing in mind, as you proceed in the comparison, the design of the argument on each side. On my side it was to prove, not that man is by nature holy, but only that he is innocent, not totally depraved, and not more inclined by nature to vice than to virtue. On the part of Dr. Woods, it was to establish the doctrine of universal and total native depravity; the inclinations, affections, and actions by nature wholly wrong. Yet, though he declares this universal, unconquerable bias to the pleasures of sin (p. 44) to be a truth written as with a sunbeam; he has in proof of it merely stated the *existence* of those dispositions and passions in young children, which no Unitarian will deny; and has neither shown them to be *universal*, nor offered a single consideration to prove, that dispositions and passions of an opposite kind do not also exist as early, as generally, and with as much practical effect. If then I have shown, (and it is expressly admitted by Dr. Woods that I have,) that amiable dispositions, veracity, kindness, good will, are characteristics of early life, I have proved all that I proposed, and all that my

scheme of doctrine required; whereas his showing, that there is also, on the other hand, much of falsehood, wrath, envy, selfishness, in the actual character, mingled with their good qualities and good dispositions, is no proof of the orthodox doctrine. That doctrine, as stated by himself, required him to show, that those bad passions and dispositions, of which he has given so vivid a picture, were unmixt, and that the other qualities did not exist.

Dr. Woods expresses his assent to the opinion of a late distinguished divine, grounded on his personal experience in the education of children; who, in a strain of bold and powerful, but loose declamation, asserts, "that in thirty years of attentive and anxious watchfulness of the conduct of thousands of children, committed to his care, he has seen *not one*, whose native character was virtuous, or whom he could pronounce free from the evil attributes he had just mentioned." Those attributes, from which, among the thousands that had passed under his observation, he had been able to witness not a *single exemption*, were these. They were, "rebellious, disobedient, unkind, wrathful, and revengeful. All were proud, ambitious, vain, and universally selfish. All of them were destitute of piety to God. They neither love, fear, nor obey him; neither admire his divine excellence, nor are thankful for his unceasing loving kindness, and though taught these duties from the commencement of their childhood, yet can be persuaded to perform them by no species of instruction hitherto de-

vised."* Such is the black picture of the youthful character given us by one of our most distinguished orthodox divines, and which meets the unqualified approbation of Dr. Woods.

An argument drawn from personal experience is most properly and satisfactorily answered by an appeal to experience. And in no case, I should think, could the appeal be more safely made, than in the present. Every one has had more or less opportunity of witnessing the conduct and the dispositions of children. Let the reader take a deliberate view of the youthful character drawn above, and compare it with his own experience. Let him say, whether, from all that he has observed in families and schools, rebellion and disobedience have seemed to him to be the prevailing state of things, and unkindness, wrath, and revenge, the constant and universal disposition. Or whether he has sometimes seen examples of obedience and submission to authority; and a friendly and obliging disposition toward each other, manifested in a readiness to do each other kind offices, to forgive wrongs, to forget injuries, and to be at peace. Has he found pride, vanity, ambition, and selfishness so to predominate, as never to have met with one humble and modest youth; nor one who was ready in any case to make a sacrifice of his own convenience, or his personal feelings or interest or gratification to perform a friendly or benevolent act? Has he seen not one instance of early piety, not one who could be brought by faithful early

* Dwight's Theology, Vol. ii. p. 8.

instruction to love or fear or obey the Author of his being, to admire his character, or be grateful for his blessings?

The writer, who now addresses you, cannot speak of thousands, that have been intrusted to his care; but he has, for a large part of his life, been concerned in the education of children and youth, and his experience has been widely different from that of the author just quoted. He has had occasion, as every parent and instructer must have, to experience much of the difficulty of giving the young a right direction, and keeping them in the right way. Yet, with all the strength of the passions and appetites, and all the influence of external temptation, amidst much to lament and condemn, he has seen much also to approve and to inspire hope; and though none are without fault, a very small proportion of those, that have fallen under his notice, have deserved the character given in the above quotation indiscriminately to all. It is not a little surprising that so sound and clear a mind as that of this author, should not have been led to a different conclusion, as to the source of the depravity of which he complains, supposing his account of it not to have been exaggerated. We see in it a melancholy instance of the power of a system to mislead and pervert even the most powerful and upright mind. He had just before asserted, that "children in the morning of life are unquestionably amiable,—more so in many respects, than at any future period." How natural then would it have seemed, were there no system to stand in the way

of the conclusion, to have attributed the high degree of human depravity discovered at a later period, less to nature, and more to education; and to have thought, that the amiable qualities, which appeared at first, rather than the unamiable ones, which took their place afterward, were the true characteristics of human nature. If, from being amiable and well disposed at first, children become otherwise or less so under the hand of instruction and discipline, it would certainly seem natural for parents and teachers to inquire how far so remarkable a fact is chargeable to nature, and how far it may be attributed to fault or defect in the mode in which their moral education is conducted. If they "find it impossible," as alleged, "to persuade their children to love, fear, or obey God, to admire his divine excellence, or to be thankful for his unceasing loving-kindness," they are certainly called upon to examine most seriously, whether the cause of it is not to be found in the representations, which have been given them of the character and government of God.

LETTER III.

Depravity not innate, natural, &c. Universality of sin. In what sense. Both sin and virtue appear early. Neither of them implies an entire change of nature. Both are in the same degree spontaneous. Virtuous dispositions not more easily eradicated than vicious. In what sense it is certain that every child born into the world will be a sinner. As certain that, in the same sense, it will be a saint.

I AM now to call your attention to the discussion in the third chapter, relative to the sense in which the words *native*, *innate*, *natural*, *hereditary*, are used when applied to human depravity, and to the propriety of their use. For illustration of the subject, examples are taken by Dr. Woods from several other dispositions, affections, or traits of character, to which the term *natural* is usually applied; such as "the social principle, pity, natural affection, strength of mind, imagination, mental imbecility, peculiarities of natural taste, bodily diseases, resemblance of children to parents," &c. I have no occasion either to assent to the observations made upon these in this chapter, nor to call in question their correctness. It will be sufficient for me to show, as I expect to do to your entire satisfaction, that in their application to moral depravity, our author has failed of proving *that* to be in a similar sense *innate* or *natural*. He has only proved, that certain passions and affections, and certain powers make a part of our natural constitution, which are the source and foundation both of virtue and vice, of sin and holiness.

1. "The *universality of sin*" is the first circumstance to which the comparison is applied, as a proof that it is natural. "All are sinners, every

child of Adam has sinned." This is true in the sense in which the phrase, *all have sinned,* is used by the apostle. But it is not true in the sense in which it is used as a proof of native depravity; viz. as implying a character. "There is no man that doth good and sinneth not." (Ecc. vii. 20.) Yet there may be those who were never habitual sinners. But with what propriety is he denominated a sinner, who has committed but a single transgression, or whose acts of disobedience have been few and seldom; while his general disposition, and the general conduct of his life has been pure? Will any pretend that a single deed of justice will entitle him to the character of an honest man, who is habitually unjust in his dealings? Yet no reason can be assigned, why a single sin should constitute a sinner, any more than a single act of virtue should give the character of a virtuous man. When it is said, "there is no man that doeth good and sinneth not," the meaning is, that there is no man, who is not *a sinner* in such a sense, as to need repentance and forgiveness, although the general course of his life were innocent and virtuous, and his general temper and disposition right. Now I may with the same truth assert, that every human being has something good in his character, as that every one has something faulty; and that every child, as soon as it is capable of moral action, has some right affections and virtuous inclinations, as that it has some that are wrong and sinful; and the former will furnish the same proof that he is holy by nature, as the latter does, that he is sinful

by nature. But neither one nor the other is proved. All that can be inferred is, that it has by nature that, which renders it capable of becoming either holy or sinful.

2. Not more conclusive is the argument next attempted to be drawn from the fact, that "the indications of depravity appear early." Admit that they appear as early as can be alleged. Admit, as stated p. 52, "that incipient exercises of sinful affection are *among the earliest things*, which our memory can recal in ourselves, or which we are able to observe in others;" what will it prove to the purpose for which it is alleged, if *the other things*, *among which* these incipient exercises appear, are affections of the opposite character? Now I have shown, and Dr. Woods will not deny, that kind affections, gratitude, regard to truth, appear as early, as any sinful affections can be discerned. For the same reason also, that we may think it probable (p. 53) "that sinful affections exist in a lower degree earlier than they become visible, we have a right to infer, that the amiable and virtuous affections are in being in an incipient state at a period prior to that, in which we are able to trace their exercise and mark their effects. If then, native original depravity is proved by the one, it cannot be denied, that native original holiness is proved by the other.

3. Another circumstance distinguishing that which is *innate*, or belonging to man from the first, and which is applied to depravity (p. 53) is, "that it cannot be traced to any change in the constitu-

tion of his nature subsequent to his birth." And the whole reasoning of Dr. Woods on the subject proceeds upon the supposition, either that I had asserted, or that the doctrine which I advanced did imply, such a change. You will therefore be not a little surprised to find, that no such change in the constitution of our nature is either asserted or implied in all that I have said; and especially when you perceive, as you cannot fail to do, that the very difficulty, which is so elaborately displayed through two or three pages, lies not against the unitarian doctrine, but is actually chargeable upon the orthodox in its full force, and with all the absurdities which he has endeavoured to fix upon it. For it is a fundamental article of the orthodox doctrine, that the *nature* of every human being is wholly corrupt, and that all, who ever become holy, become so by an entire change of their nature. Now is there any greater difficulty or absurdity in the supposition of a change of nature from holy to sinful, than from sinful to holy? And might not the one be accounted for and explained upon the same principles, which would serve to account for and explain the other? The latter of these makes a part of the orthodox faith; but according to the unitarian doctrine, neither of them is to be accounted for or explained.

The doctrine, which I have before stated, as I supposed, too distinctly to be misunderstood, is, that men are born into the world neither holy nor sinful, but with those faculties, affections, and principles, by which they are capable of becoming

either; and that no change in the constitution of our nature is necessary, in order to their becoming either the one or the other. What we have actually to account for is, not a change of nature from original holiness to universal sinfulness, as you might be led to suppose from Dr. Woods' manner of discussing the subject; but the infinite variety of character, that soon appears in beings, who, at their birth, and for some time afterward, are apparently so nearly alike. We have to account for the fact, constantly presented to our observation, that those, between whom, in infancy, there is so exact a resemblance, as to their intellectual and moral state; as soon as they begin to use their faculties, should become so widely separated from each other, and distinguished by an endless diversity in the passions, affections, and dispositions, which mark their character. That the good and bad qualities are found so early to prevail, together and apart, in every different proportion and combination that can be imagined; gentleness and cruelty, pride and humility, the selfish and the social feelings, sensuality, and spiritual-mindedness, the fear of God and sense of duty, and regardlesness of the will and authority of God. Now to account for this variety, beginning to discover itself so early, increasing as the field of activity enlarges, as the relations of life multiply, as reason gains strength, as knowledge is extended, and as the passions and appetites assume new appearances; we think it sufficient to assert the activity and freedom of man. By this is meant,

that in every action of life, after moral agency commences by the exercise of those faculties, on which it depends, he has the power of making either a right or wrong choice; and that according as he exercises that power and uses the freedom it implies, he actually becomes better or worse, the good or bad dispositions are strengthened and gain an ascendancy, and the good or bad tendencies prevail. It is to this inherent activity, and freedom of choice in its direction, that we attribute the difference of conduct of persons in similar circumstances, and the difference of character formed under similar discipline. This, and this only, we think, will account for all the phenomena of human action, and all the varieties in the human character. Without denying the influence of motives, or impairing their value, and the importance of enforcing those, by which men ought to be governed, we thus account for the fact, otherwise inexplicable, that the same motives have not the same influence over all minds, nor over the same mind at all times. This we attribute to a power, which the mind itself has, of obeying or resisting any motive that is presented.

But how is this variety of conduct and character to be explained upon the orthodox supposition of total native depravity? Beings wholly corrupt by nature, inclined only to evil, all whose affections and actions are wrong, can exhibit none of this variety. The first good thought or right affection,—a single virtuous action or resolution must indicate an entire change of nature, and then every thought, and

affection and action must be holy. For, as by the supposition, a corrupt nature can produce no good thought or action, so a holy nature can produce no evil thought or action. Every individual of mankind, accordingly, must be either wholly good or wholly bad; entirely holy or entirely sinful; right in every affection, thought, and action, or wrong in every thought, affection, and action. I ask whether observation and experience confirm this description, and teach us that such is the character of man; or whether they do not present a race of beings, the best of whom are not without sin, and the worst of whom, we are not sure, are wholly destitute of every good quality, and strangers to every good thought, affection, and action.

The whole discussion (pp. 53—57) would have been spared, had Dr. Woods understood the single phrase, to which he so many times refers, in the sense, in which a slight attention to the whole passage in which it stands, and the whole scope of my reasoning, must have shown him, was the sense, in which it was used by me. It is scarcely possible, I think, for an intelligent and attentive reader not to perceive, that in asserting, as I did, (p. 27) "that veracity is the general character of children, until the disposition and tendency of nature has been changed by education, example, and circumstances," I must have meant something quite different from that "universal change in the moral constitution of man," (p. 54) "change in the constitution of his nature," (p. 53) "change in our nature," (p. 56) which is the whole foundation of the argument in

those pages, and without which the whole is to no purpose.

If the expressions which I made use of require the interpretation which is put upon them, I can only lament having made so careless and incorrect a use of language; but on the other hand, if the words themselves fairly admit, and the whole passage in connexion requires a different interpretation, I cannot but regret that my opponent should waste so much reasoning, grounded on a false interpretation.

4. A fourth reason is assigned (p. 57) "for considering man's depravity natural," viz. that it is *spontaneous*, like the animal appetites, gratitude, compassion, &c. which "require no laborious discipline to produce them. Corrupt affections, it is said, are excited in children as soon as the occasions for exercising them occur. The feeling of pride, ill will, and revenge shows itself spontaneously in their looks and actions." But do not good affections also, such as kindness, gratitude, and humility arise as spontaneously, as early, and as often? I am persuaded that the experience of every parent will answer, that they do. With what propriety then can the former be alleged as proofs of natural depravity, rather than the latter of natural holiness? Why are not the amiable qualities as clear indications of something good in our nature, as the opposite unamiable ones of something bad? That it is *spontaneous*, "that it arises of its own accord, before they have considered whether it is good or bad, is as just a reason

for saying, that it takes away the immorality and blame-worthiness of what is bad, as that it destroys the virtue, or impairs the merit of what is good.

5. A similar and equally satisfactory reply may be made to the next proof, "that moral evil in man is natural or innate, viz. that it is hard to be eradicated, and resists powerful means of overcoming it." For, the same may be said with equal truth of the good affections and principles of our nature, which are the foundation and the defence of virtue. If vicious propensities are not easily cured, and bad habits not easily corrected; so neither is it easy, in many instances, to eradicate virtuous principles; and they even triumph over the united influence of strong temptation, powerful motive, and bad example. Such is sometimes the natural love of truth, that no temptation of interest, and no motive of fear are sufficient to overcome it. Such the sense of justice, as effectually to resist selfishness. Such the power of natural modesty, as to impose a restraint on the strongest propensities, and to preserve innocence and purity in the midst of temptation. If frequent and melancholy instances occur of children, who, with the advantages of good instruction and good example, have yielded to temptation, resisted all motives to virtue, and all efforts to save them, and abandoned themselves to vice; we have seen others, on the other hand, that have maintained a virtuous course, amidst strong temptations; and, in spite of bad instruction and bad example, have preserved their purity, piety, and fidelity uncor-

rupted. I cheerfully join in the appeal to experience on this subject, confident that her report will be fatal to the orthodox doctrine of depravity, if we shall be as ready to listen to that part of it, which relates to what is amiable and virtuous, as to that which states the corrupt and vicious tendencies and propensities of early life.

6. To the reasoning on pp. 59, 60, grounded on "the certainty that every child born into the world will be a sinner," whence it is inferred, that this certainty must have its foundation in the constitution of human nature, and not in any thing accidental to man; the reply is short and complete. The fallacy lies, in the first place, in the sense in which the word *sinner* is used, and in the second place, in a part only of the truth, and not the whole being expressed. If the word sinner is here used, as the designation of a character, and it be intended by the use of this term to assert, that the prevailing disposition, the affections, thoughts, and actions universally will be sinful, the assertion is not true. It is far from being an acknowledged fact, that all men are sinners in that sense, or that any one individual child will certainly be a sinner in the same sense. The argument proceeds on the assumption of the very point in controversy. But if it be only meant, that we can with certainty predict concerning any child that is born into the world, that it will commit sin, or will have some sinful affection, which may be said to constitute him a sinner in a certain sense, though his character be generally virtuous, then the argument is wholly fallacious. Because, as I observed in the second place, but a part of the truth is

thus presented. It is as certain, that every child that is born into the world will have some good affections, as that it will have those, that are sinful; and it may be predicted with the same confidence, that it will practise some virtue, as that it will commit some sin. It is accordingly, like each of the other arguments, of no more avail to establish the doctrine of natural depravity, than it is to establish that of original and innate holiness.

In the concluding paragraph of this chapter it is admitted by Dr. Woods, as it had been virtually before, that kindness, gratitude, love of truth, and other things of a like kind are, as I had represented them to be, natural properties of man; and it is implied that they are admitted to be natural in the same sense, and for as good reasons, as depravity is natural; for he says, "when those reasons are given, we may see, whether the reasons, which prove them to be natural, are stronger than those, which prove human depravity to be so." My answer is, that it has not been pretended, that they are stronger. It is enough for my purpose if they are *as strong*. It establishes all that I have wished to maintain in opposition to the orthodox faith, viz. that neither virtue nor vice is innate; that man is neither sinful nor holy by nature; that he is exclusively inclined neither to vice nor virtue, but is by nature equally capable of either. If, as the paragraph before us would seem to imply, all that the orthodox wish to prove is, that sin is natural to man in the same sense that holiness is, there need be no controversy on the subject; and all that has been written might have been spared.

LETTER IV.

Misrepresentation of the unitarian method of reasoning. Evasion of the point at issue. Depravity not shown to be consistent with the moral character of God.

I NOW request you to proceed with me in the examination of the fourth chapter of the book before me, which is intended to show *the consistency of the orthodox doctrine of depravity with the moral attributes of God.* The author introduces his views of the proper method of reasoning on the subject, by a complaint, which it is necessary for me to notice, in order to remove the false impression, which might otherwise be received, as to the method of reasoning pursued by unitarians. Now I am not aware, that it is maintained by any unitarian, much less that it is, as is implied p. 62, "a common principle with unitarians, that a difficulty, which they are not able to solve, is to be considered as sufficient to disprove a doctrine supported by clear and conclusive evidence." If it be so, Dr. Woods will be able to refer to the book and page, where the assertion is to be found; and he ought to have done it, when he ventured to make so extraordinary a charge. But he will be able to support the charge only by resorting to such remote inferences, as will enable one to prove any thing from any writing. The plain fact is, that the method of reasoning, stated by our author, to be that, which should be adopted upon this, as well as physical subjects, is precisely that, which unitarians have uniformly pursued, and on which they have entirely relied. They have always rested the question respecting the

doctrine of depravity, where Dr. Woods says it ought to be placed, on the evidence of observation, experience, and the word of God. "Whatever God has declared, and observation and experience teach, must be unhesitatingly admitted as certain truth." But in ascertaining what is taught by observation and experience, there is room for inquiry, discussion, and diversity of opinion. It is not a single unconnected fact or phenomenon, that is to decide the question, the existence of which is to be determined by a concurrent testimony, and where there is no room for disagreement. On the contrary, so extensive, various, and complicated are they, that the great difficulty is to settle the question, what observation and experience do teach. Nor have we any better reason for thinking, that it may be easily and hastily decided, in all cases, "what God has declared by revelation." The revelation of God is conveyed to us in human language, in itself imperfect, and liable to be misunderstood and misinterpreted; communicated by imperfect men; connected with history and a variety of other circumstances, from which it is to be separated; transmitted to us through a long succession of ages, and by means of books, which have been translated from one language into another of a very different construction, and in which it is sometimes not easy to be satisfied, that the same meaning is conveyed, as is expressed in the original. From these considerations, and others which might be added, it happens, that the question, what God has declared by revelation, is one that is not to be answered by

adducing a single, clear, and decisive declaration. The answer is to be furnished by an extensive and close investigation. It is sometimes to be drawn from a comparison of passages, between which apparent contradiction is to be reconciled; sometimes it is to be found in the application of rules and principles of interpretation to bold and uncommon figures; sometimes by eliciting the meaning conveyed in references and allusions to things, of which we can now have but imperfect knowledge; and not seldom are we required to choose between different interpretations, where a slight balance of evidence only for one in preference to the other must decide the choice.

It happens accordingly, that in making up our opinion what the doctrine of revelation is on some important points, its consistency with other doctrines, which are clear and admit of no doubt, must constitute a part of the ground upon which we proceed. This I believe is allowed on all sides to be fair and necessary. It is distinctly recognized to be so by Dr. Woods himself. Speaking of another important doctrine of religion, (p. 163) he says, "I consider it to be one of those plain truths of revelation, which ought to limit and regulate our conceptions of other subjects, and *I make it a rule*," he adds, "*not to admit any views of any other doctrine, inconsistent with this.*" Dr. Woods then admits, that in the case to which he refers, and I presume he will not say that the principle is limited to that case, the consistency of a doctrine proposed with another unquestionable doctrine of religion makes a part of

the ground upon which the doctrine itself is to be received. As the moral character of God then is an established point, about which there is no question, the consistency of the doctrine of depravity with the moral character of God must make a part of the argument, by which depravity is to be proved as a matter of fact. It is evident, therefore, that it can never be so proved as a matter of fact by any other mode of reasoning, that its consistency with the moral character of God can be assumed upon that ground, as not needing any further proof.

With these remarks I now refer you to what is said in my second Letter to Trinitarians and Calvinists, and in connexion with it to the sixteen first pages in the fourth chapter of Dr. Woods' reply. You will be able then to estimate the elaborate argument in those pages, grounded wholly on a misinterpretation of the meaning of a single sentence, and which it is evident Dr. Woods himself suspected at least to be a misinterpretation, and which a fair view of it in connexion with the whole argument in which it stands, would have shown him was so unquestionably.

Towards the close of the chapter, Dr. Woods proceeds to offer some direct arguments to prove the consistency of native depravity with the moral perfections of God. But I shall endeavour to show, that all he has said is liable to one of the two following objections, viz. It either assumes for the argument that, which requires to be first proved; or it proceeds by a palpable evasion of the point at issue. Thus it cannot be necessary for

me to multiply words in order to show you, that, (p. 79) instead of leaving the naked statement of several suppositions, on the grounds of which it is asserted, that the doctrines in question may be reconciled with each other; it behoved him to offer some proof of the several points, which he affirms if proved, will show, that the orthodox doctrine of depravity is consistent with the justice, wisdom, and goodness of God. For a single example, as a specimen of the whole, when he had said, "that man's native depravity is not in the least inconsistent with divine justice, *if it be so, that man, notwithstanding his native depravity, never suffers more, than what he truly deserves for his own personal sins*;" he was bound to prove that, according to our natural notions of justice, a being created with a nature totally depraved, inclined only to evil, and incapable of having a good thought, affection, or inclination without an influence of the spirit of God, which is not granted to him, and which he can do nothing to obtain, and is punished with eternal misery for his sins committed under these circumstances, yet suffers no more than he truly deserves. He has prudently forborne to attempt this; and the argument is accordingly without force, being built on an unsupported supposition.

Instead of this, assuming, (p. 81) "that native depravity is to be explained upon the same principle as the existence of moral evil, and that the proper answer to the question how either of them is consistent with the moral perfection of God, is the same;" all that is said in the subsequent pages is

applicable to the question, whether the existence of moral evil be reconcileable with the moral perfections of God, but not to the question, whether the same moral evil, having its source in natural depravity, can be so reconciled. This is a manifest evasion of the point at issue; and it is rendered complete by the author's constantly confounding together *the beginning of sin*, and *its source and origin*, as if they meant the same thing. Thus it is asked, (p. 83) "How does it appear that the moral perfection of God must necessarily preclude the existence of sin at the commencement of his moral agency?" and again it is said, "when we assert that man is a sinner, or begins to sin as soon as he is a moral agent, we no more attribute sin to the immediate agency of God, than those do, who assert that sin begins at any subsequent time."

Now the question at issue is not, as is here implied, *at what time*, whether earlier or later, the commencement of sin may be consistent with the moral perfections of God; but whether its originating in a nature wholly corrupt, in natural affections wholly wrong, and an inclination only to evil, in connexion with the other doctrines of calvinism, which subject him to wrath and eternal misery for possessing such a nature, be consistent with the moral attributes of God. Not a word, that you find in the chapter before us, reaches to this point; nothing, therefore, which the subject of the chapter required and gave us a right to expect.

He, who will reconcile the orthodox doctrine of depravity with the moral character of God, must

show, that it is consistent with the justice and goodness of God, to bring into existence a race of beings capable of high degrees of enjoyment and suffering; on account of the sin of the first of the race, to punish all the succeeding generations by creating them, not as he was created, holy, pure, with right affections, and inclined to good; but totally corrupt, inclined only to evil, every affection wrong, naturally hating him who made them, and all that is good, and utterly incapable of thinking or feeling otherwise than they do think and feel, until a total change of their nature is effected by a mighty influence of the spirit of God; to obtain which influence and consequent change of nature, they are incapable of contributing in any degree by any effort they can make. That this influence is actually exercised upon some, producing an entire change in their disposition and will, causing them to love supremely what they before hated supremely, but exercised in a perfectly arbitrary manner, not on account of any thing in them, or any thing they had done or could do to deserve to be thus distinguished from the rest of their race, who are suffered to remain, as they were first made, unholy and sinful, and to perish; but by a sovereign act of election, according to which it was predetermined before they were brought into being thus to deliver them, and to leave the rest to hopeless, remediless and endless woe.

If it is your opinion, that Dr. Woods has shown this in the chapter before us, you will be satisfied that he has done all, that he was required to do.

Otherwise you will perceive that he has yet before him a task, which he will find it not easy to accomplish even to his own satisfaction.

LETTER V.

Native depravity not consistent with moral agency. Preparatory considerations. Improper and deceptive use of terms. In what sinfulness consists. How an innocent being may become a sinner. Definition of a moral agent. Course pursued by Dr. Woods. Adam's transgression. Quotation from Dr. Emmons.

The question proposed in the Vth Chapter, viz. "Whether native depravity be consistent with moral agency," is one that is involved in greater difficulty, than almost any other that belongs to the calvinistic controversy. I shall prepare the way for what I have to advance on this subject by attempting to correct a manner of speaking, which is very common, but which, I think, is calculated to introduce confusion, and wholly to mislead the mind. What I refer to is the manner in which the terms sin and holiness, sinners and saints, regenerate and unregenerate, are used by theological writers. They are employed in theological discussions in such a manner, as to convey no true ideas; so as to express nothing to which we find any thing in existence answering. Your impression taken from the common use of these terms is, that sin and holiness are not only opposites, but opposites in such a sense, that they can never exist together in the same person. And in conformity with this distinction, that all mankind are divided

into two classes, perfectly distinct and entirely separate from each other, viz. saints and sinners, the righteous and the wicked; the former wholly righteous, the latter totally wicked. But you find no such beings actually existing. You meet with nothing in your intercourse with the world, answering to the images, that books have presented to your mind. None, on the one hand, appear to be so totally corrupt, as to be utterly destitute of right affections and good feelings, to have no sense of justice, benevolence, or truth, and to perform no good actions. On the other hand, in the best men you discover faults and defects of character. None are so pure and perfect, that you see in them nothing to censure, no expression of the passions or affections, and no indulgence of the appetites, which is sinful in kind, or excessive and unreasonable, and therefore criminal, in degree. In each individual with whom you have any intercourse, from childhood to old age, you discover, not a single unvaried hue of moral character, but a mixture, in various proportions, of qualities exceedingly different from each other. In none are the virtues or vices found to exist in the highest degree, or in the same degree at all times. Often the character of men, whatever its prevalent cast, is seen to undergo considerable changes, to be apparently unfixt and vacillating, the moral principle, sense of duty, fear of God, power of conscience, or whatever you call that restraining and regulating principle, which should influence and govern the whole conduct of life, operating more effectually at one time than at another.

Now in all this, our experience is certainly very different from what we should expect it to be, if the orthodox use of the terms in question were correct; if, for example, all human beings were sinners, or holy, in the sense in which these terms are applied; and it is by reasoning from those terms, as if the sense in which they are used was the true sense, that we are led to false conclusions, and often from not perceiving this first error, are unable to discover where the fallacy lies, which has led us to those that follow.

It may help us somewhat to recover ourselves, to recollect, that this use of the terms in question had its origin in the very system, which it is thus brought to support. It was not observation and experience, that first suggested the separation of mankind into two classes, so entirely distinct, and opposite to each other in a moral view, to be designated by terms understood as expressing such entire opposition. The terms, indeed, are taken from the sacred writings, where they are used in a popular sense; but it was that system of theology, of which the doctrine of total depravity and irresistible grace make a part, that suggested their application in a strict and literal sense.

Now in order to discover the fallacy by which we have been misled, we must pursue the opposite course. We must begin with facts, as observation and experience present them. What we perceive in ourselves and witness in all about us is, not a single and unshaded character, but a mixture of qualities, dispositions and tendencies. In endeav-

ouring to trace these to their source, we shall find their proximate cause in several parts of our sensual, intellectual and moral constitution. Thus we find in ourselves, and in all human beings, passions and appetites and affections, that are continually prompting to activity. These have all some real or supposed good toward which they are directed; and all of them have external objects answering to them, and suitable for them. Reason is also given us to be the guide of our conduct, to enable us to distinguish what is right and wrong in conduct, and to know what may be done with innocence and safety, and what is to be avoided as criminal and hurtful. And, when reason has performed her office as a monitor beforehand, conscience is implanted within us, as a faithful censor, to approve or condemn us afterward, according as we shall have obeyed or disregarded her direction.

Now in the simple possession of no part of our physical or moral constitution is there any merit or guilt, any thing to deserve praise or blame. Passions and appetites that are the strongest, are innocent as a part of our make, and we only incur guilt, when we follow their impulse in disobedience to the laws God has imposed in giving us reason, and in violation of conscience. This applies to every appetite of our animal nature even the strongest. To whatever degrees of guilt or misery it may lead, the appetite itself is not sinful. It is not eradicated in those, who are born to holiness and virtue. It exists in the most heavenly minded. The reason why it is sinless in him, and not in the

profligate is, not that it is different in its nature, but that it is subjected to restraint and a proper direction in its operation.

It applies also to the strongest passions of the human breast; hope, fear, love, desire, anger and hatred. Take any one of them. Let it be that, in the exercise of which more guilt, it is probable, is actually incurred, than in either of the others. I mean anger. In the passion itself there is no sin. It becomes sinful only by being voluntarily indulged in degree beyond what reason allows and justice requires, toward objects by which it is not deserved, or longer than is demanded to answer the purpose, for which the passion was originally implanted in the human breast. The passion is not eradicated in the best of men. It is only subjected to the restraints and regulations, which reason and conscience impose. The mere susceptibility to its operation in the good man and the sinner is the same. The difference between them consists in its being on the one hand duly controled in its exercise, or, on the other hand, suffered to break forth with intemperate heat, and in all the hurtful forms of cruelty and peevishness, rage and revenge.

The same remarks apply to the principle of self-love. Though it may be a fruitful source of sin, and does undoubtedly lie at the foundation of much of the moral evil that is in the world; in the affection itself there is no guilt. It is as strong in the innocent and virtuous, as in the corrupt and wicked. It is sinful, only when it becomes an exclusive passion; when it extinguishes the kind

and benevolent affections, impairs the sense and prevents the exercise of justice and humanity, and degenerates into pride, avarice or ambition; and leads to the formation of a character and of habits, from which the social affections and social virtues are excluded.

To impart a moral character to our conduct, and render us praise or blame worthy in it, other parts of our nature, besides those that have just been the immediate subject of consideration, are to be taken into the account. As has before been suggested, there must be an understanding to perceive the effects of actions and their tendency, and that moral discernment, which distinguishes between right and wrong. These, as well as the passions, appetites and affections, to which it is their office to give the right direction, are necessary to constitute a moral agent, capable of good or ill desert, and the proper subject of a moral law.

Now in a practical application of this view of our animal, intellectual, and moral nature, in the judgment we pass upon ourselves and others, the result is, that we blame others, and are conscious of deserving blame ourselves, just in proportion as in obedience to the passions and appetites, we violate conscience. For conscience is the immediate law of our moral nature. Under whatever dispensation we live, it is equally the guide and judge of our actions. The only difference is in the greater or less degree of clearness, in which the rule of life and principles of judgment are revealed to us, according as we have only the light of nature, or

have also that of revelation to guide us. Thus, I have observed, do we always judge, in estimating the degree of good or ill desert in ourselves or others. We consider neither an ideot nor a madman as accountable for his actions, though either of them may act under the influence of the strongest appetite or the most violent passion; for this plain reason, that being incapable of distinguishing between right and wrong, he is not a proper subject of moral government.

These remarks have been intended to bring us to a just view of the nature of sin, and in what guilt or ill desert consists. It is not in any thing that is born with us, nor even in all, that we are by nature, whether appetites, affections, or passions. These are all alike in their native state, equally innocent, undeserving of either praise or blame, and consistent with his becoming either a virtuous man or a sinner, in whom they originally exist in any degree of strength, in which they are ever implanted in the heart of man by the Author of his being.

Upon the ground of these observations, and by a similar process, having ascertained what constitutes sin, and makes him a sinner, who performs the act; let us now proceed to inquire how a human being may first become a sinner. Let us suppose such a being in the full possession of the whole animal, intellectual, and moral constitution of man in its mature state. He has by the supposition then together with all the natural appetites and the passions belonging to man in their usual strength,

the intellectual and moral powers of our nature in their full maturity. Thus constituted, he is placed in a situation to bring all his faculties into exercise; surrounded by objects suited to the several appetites, and in the midst of relations in which there is room for all the passions to be called forth. Within certain limits, prescribed by reason and conscience, the indulgence of every appetite is natural and innocent, beyond which it becomes sinful. The same is true also, as respects each of the passions. It is possible, therefore, that for any given time, the directing and controlling power of reason and conscience may be preserved, and a being thus constituted and so placed by the Creator shall retain its innocence, and continue free from all moral defect. Yet it is possible also, on the other hand, that it may depart from the path of virtue and become a sinner, at any moment. For he becomes so by a single instance of a voluntary violation of known duty in obedience to either of the appetites or passions. By the first, though it should be the only instance of this nature, he becomes a sinner in such a sense, as to need repentance,—in the sense in which it may be said that all men are sinners,—and in which it is said in the sacred writings, that there is no man that doth good and sinneth not.

It is believed that the supposition which has now been made is the only one, upon which can be solved in a satisfactory manner the great problem of the introduction of moral evil into the system; and by which we are to account for the first sin of the

first man; whether it were committed soon after his creation, or after he had continued long in a state of innocence and moral rectitude. It will account also for the rapid increase of moral evil, and its spread after it was once introduced into the system. The exact balance and right adjustment of the several parts of the animal and moral constitution was then disturbed. One deviation from the right path made another more likely to take place, because, by a single act of criminal indulgence, the power of temptation was increased, and that of resistance diminished. The passion or appetite that triumphed had gained strength, and the force of moral principle was impaired.

The descendants of the first transgressor, accordingly, commence their existence under circumstances of increased liability to sin, and greater difficulty of preserving their innocency, and retaining their moral uprightness; not because of any change of their nature from what it was originally, but on account of a difference in the external circumstances, under which they come into the world. Example is added to the influences which existed before. Occasions of sin are multiplied, and inducements to it are increased and strengthened. Hence, though the moral constitution of man were by nature the same in all the descendants of Adam, that it was originally in him, any individual of his posterity will be far more likely, than he was, to lose the innocence and moral uprightness in which he was created, insomuch that without supposing any inherent native depravity, as the cause, there

may be what we term a moral certainty respecting any child that is born into the world, that if it live to become a moral and accountable being, it will become a sinner; that is, it will commit sin, deserve punishment, and stand in need of repentance and forgiveness.

But how different is this from his becoming a sinner in the orthodox sense of the word, wholly inclined to evil, and all his affections and actions wrong and sinful! As I use the word here, and as I would be understood in using the phrase, *all men are sinners*, the meaning is, one who has committed sin, who needs divine forgiveness, but whose affections and thoughts and actions may yet be generally and habitually right.

By a single voluntary indulgence of a wrong affection, according to the scheme for which I contend, a man becomes a sinner.* A single right affection, according to that of my opponents, renders him a saint. It will be a question of serious import with every one, whose estimate of the human character is drawn from observation and experience, and not formed upon system and hypothesis, whether there ever existed in the world a sinner, answering to the orthodox definition of the word.

* Experience has taught me the necessity of guarding against being misunderstood. The reader, therefore, who perceives an apparent contradiction between what is here said, with what he finds on p. 27, is requested to read that passage with sufficient attention to perceive, that I make a distinction between a *habitual sinner* and one who, though prevailingly virtuous, is so far a sinner as to need pardon, and that it is in compliance with usage, and not as being strictly correct, that I apply the term in the latter sense.

With the views, which have now been stated, in our minds, let us pass in review the reasoning of Dr. Woods in the chapter under consideration, and take notice of his exceptions to what I had said on the subject in my former publication.

The inquiry, "whether the orthodox doctrine of depravity be inconsistent with moral agency," is very properly introduced by the definition of a moral agent, which is, that "a moral agent is one who acts under a moral law, and is accountable for his actions." To this definition, for the purpose of the present inquiry, I make no objection. But as the doctrine of depravity is charged with being inconsistent with moral agency, and it was his professed design to meet this charge, it was naturally to have been expected, that he would proceed directly from the definition, to the statement of the argument which was to prove, that, thus defined, the doctrine of depravity, as held by the orthodox, was not inconsistent with it. The course which he has actually pursued, however, is somewhat different.

His first step is, pp. 86, 87, to represent me, in admitting that men are capable of sin, and may be actually the subjects of sin, as soon as they are moral agents; and that they are moral agents by their natural birth; as implying all that is necessary to establish the doctrine of natural depravity.*

* You will observe that he does not pretend, that it establishes *the consistency of natural depravity with moral agency*, which is the point here in question, but only *the fact of its existence*, that is, *that mankind are naturally depraved.*

But the slightest attention to my argument, when I said what implied, that men are moral agents by their birth, will show my meaning to have been, that by their natural birth they possess the powers and faculties, which are requisite to moral agency. How soon they are so far developed, and actually come into exercise as to render him, who thus possesses them, accountable for his actions, it was no part of my design to decide. But, if the account which I have just given of the manner in which an innocent person may become a sinner be correct, you will perceive, that at whatever period it takes place, though its very first act should be a sinful one, it will prove nothing respecting natural depravity.

I have no hesitation in acceding to what the author says in the next paragraph; that "men must be really as capable of sin at the commencement of their moral existence, as at any subsequent period." They undoubtedly are so; and for the same reason also, they are equally capable of holiness.

Our author next proceeds (pp. 88, 89) to a representation of the gradual development of the infant faculties, and the gradual process by which, from the smallest beginnings, the children, in whom this takes place, become moral and accountable beings; in which, as far as it goes, I fully concur. "In early childhood," he says, "there is a small and almost imperceptible beginning of sinful affection, a beginning exactly corresponding to the feeble dawn of reason and conscience, and the incipient state of moral agency.

After this, sinful affection and action gradually increase with the increasing strength of the intellectual and moral faculties, till they rise to their ultimate state." This, I observe, expresses in my apprehension, as far as it goes, the exact truth. It only required, in order to express the whole truth, that he should have added, that holy affection and virtuous action gradually increase in the same manner, and by the same laws. But how will the account he has here given consist with the orthodox doctrine of *total native depravity?* If we are by nature totally depraved, inclined wholly to evil, every affection and action wrong; what room is there for becoming more and more sinful? Wholly sinful at first, any change to which we were subject, it would seem, must be to a less sinful state, since it is impossible it should be to one more so. Besides, all this you perceive also relates to the *existence of natural depravity* only, and not to its consistency with moral agency.

The writer next proceeds, by an elaborate discussion running through twenty pages, to show, not what the question which he had proposed at the head of the chapter required, viz. "that depravity is not inconsistent with moral agency;" but a very different thing, and one that has no necessary connexion with it, that is, that in denying native depravity, and attempting to account for the existence of moral evil without it, I am chargeable with the absurdity of making sin the cause of itself, accounting for the first act of sin by a preceding sinful act; or else of referring it to a cause

not sinful, and thus making holiness the cause of sin; a bad action to flow from a good disposition. Whether any such absurdity is involved in my manner of accounting for the existence of moral evil, and its commencement in the individual sinner, I am ready to submit to your judgment, referring you only to what I have before said on the subject, together with the account which you find in the beginning of this Letter; where I endeavour to show, in what manner sin may have been first introduced, and an individual person, originally innocent, may become a sinner. If that is admitted to be a rational and satisfactory account, the charge which I refer to, and the whole passage in which it is contained, require no further answer.

But besides that no part of the reasoning, in the chapter under consideration, is directed to the point, which was formally announced at the beginning of it, as the subject of inquiry; the conclusions toward which it actually tended, and which it was designed to establish, you will perceive, the author has completely overthrown in his last paragraph. For we there (p. 110) meet with the following concession, as creditable to the frankness and honesty of the writer, as it is fatal to the only argument, which is of any weight in support of the main doctrine in question. "I frankly acknowledge," he says, "that the occurrence of sin in Adam, who is admitted on both sides to have been sinless at first, does invalidate the argument of the orthodox, so far as they have attempted to prove the native depravity of man from the naked fact, that they all

commit sin. For if an individual, the parent of our race, may change from native innocence to sin, we could not by our own reason certainly determine, that it would be impossible for the whole race to change in like manner." Let me now request you, with the passage just quoted fresh in your mind, to turn back and reperuse the whole preceding discussion. You find a large portion of the chapter is employed in exposing the absurdity of the supposition, that sin can possibly arise from any thing, but a previous sinful disposition. Yet it is admitted that Adam had no such previous sinful disposition. It is asserted (p. 93) that, "according to the settled constitution of human nature, no motives, no exercise of the mind, no occasions can ever produce a new moral disposition or affection, that is to say, one which does not in some way already belong to the mind." Yet in Adam a new affection and disposition was produced, opposite entirely to any, that had existed before. It is again asserted (p. 98) that, "if you would account for the origin of moral evil in man, you must account for the wrong disposition or sinfulness of heart, which is *just as evidently presupposed* in every particular act and every mode of sinning, as goodness of disposition is presupposed in every act of obedience, or as the principle of gravitation is presupposed in every instance, in which a stone falls to the earth. "My position is," he adds, "that men have this sinfulness or depravity of heart by nature, and that it is not the effect of any change they undergo after their birth." But Adam was holy by nature, and yet

became a sinner. And Dr. Woods has not informed us how he came by that previous sinfulness of heart, which is so evidently presupposed in the first sin he committed. Besides, if goodness, as stated above, is presupposed in every act of obedience, there is, according to Dr. Woods' own principles, the same evidence that men are good by nature, as that they are sinful by nature, that they have naturally right dispositions, as that they have those, which are wrong; for he admits some of the virtues to be characteristics of early life, and here we are told, that good actions must proceed and can proceed only from good disposition, that the good must exist in nature, before it can exist in act, so that, to obey the law, by the exercise of kindness, gratitude, and the practice of truth, presupposes a goodness of disposition, or a right tendency of nature. It as certainly presupposes a holy nature, as bad affections or actions presuppose a corrupt nature, or as the fall of any individual stone presupposes gravity.

But it is said, (p. 112) "It is as true of Adam, as of any other man, that every sinful volition and act of his presupposed a sinful disposition, and must have arisen from it. And the first existence of that sinful disposition in his case is a fact, as hard to be accounted for, as the existence of native depravity in his posterity." It is to be presumed then, that in Dr. Woods' opinion, it is to be accounted for in the same way, as far as the circumstances of the case will admit. Nor do I perceive any reasonable grounds of objection, or that it can

be better accounted for in any other way. I can see no greater difficulty in the one case, than in the other. The only difference is, that God is supposed to bring all the posterity of Adam into being at first with a nature wholly depraved, entirely hostile to himself and his laws, and with inclinations and affections wholly wrong; whereas he made Adam at first holy, with a nature and disposition tending only to good, but changed his nature afterward, and gave him a disposition to evil. For according to all the reasoning in this book, and several express declarations in the chapter under consideration, it is a manifest contradiction, and the greatest absurdity possible, to suppose that Adam, with a nature entirely holy, could do any thing himself to change that nature, or, until it was changed, could possibly commit a single sin. For a single sin implies a previous sinful disposition. To make him a sinner then, after he had been created at first holy, must have been an immediate act of God. An exertion of the same Almighty power is implied in it, as was required in making all his descendants originally sinners, that is, with a nature wholly depraved. The nature of the one, as well as of the other, from which, according to the scheme in contemplation, all their sinful acts proceeded, must have been the direct work of God. Nor can I perceive that either of them is more or less consistent, than the other, with the moral character and government of God, or with the moral agency of man. Yet Dr. Woods seems to have a secret thought, or an apprehension that his

readers may have a thought, that there is a difference of some importance; since he forbears to say explicitly of the latter, what he does of the former. It is an inference only, though certainly one, which it was intended should be made, that the change of nature in Adam from holy to sinful is as much the direct and sole act of God, as the original gift of a corrupt nature to his posterity. In coupling them together, however, and joining with them the case of "the angels, who kept not their first estate," he chooses to say, "it is an ultimate fact in God's empire," although the whole preceding reasoning has proceeded upon the ground, that as respects the posterity of Adam, it is not an ultimate fact, but one which was to be accounted for and explained.

More intrepid and less cautious advocates of the orthodox faith have not hesitated to declare explicitly, what Dr. Woods has, with evident reluctance, allowed us to infer, respecting the agency of God in the first sinful act of the first man. Dr. Emmons, one of the ablest, and clearest, and most consistent writers, that has appeared on the side of orthodoxy, thus expresses himself. "As all other methods to account for the fall of Adam by the instrumentality of second causes, are insufficient to remove the difficulty, it seems necessary to have recourse to the divine agency, and to suppose that God wrought in Adam both to will and to do in his first transgression. His first sin was a free voluntary exercise, *produced by divine operation* in the view of motives. Satan placed certain

motives before his mind, which, *by a divine energy*, took hold of his heart, and led him into sin."* Again, "while Adam was placed in such a perfectly holy and happy situation, it is extremely difficult to conceive how he should be led into sin without the immediate interposition of the Deity. It is in vain to attempt to account for the first sin of the first man by the instrumentality of second causes. And until we are willing to admit the interposition of the Supreme first cause, we must be content to consider the fall of Adam as an unfathomable mystery."†

What Dr. Emmons has so boldly and distinctly said, is, as I have before observed, fully implied in what I have quoted from the book before me. It is, that the first existence of a sinful disposition in Adam, like native depravity in his descendants, is to be traced to the same *direct*, *positive*, *sovereign* act of creative power. The only difference between him and them being this, that a sinful nature was given to them at first, but to him after he had for some time possessed a sinless nature. "Each to be regarded, as an "ultimate fact in God's empire; a fact perfectly consistent with the holiness of his character, and *with the principles of moral agency*."

By the last part of the sentence just cited, viz. "*consistent with the principles of moral agency*," we are reminded of what purported to be the subject of discussion. But the chapter has been chiefly employed on the metaphysical argument in

* Sermon x. p. 235. I refer to a volume of sermons, by Dr. Emmons, printed at Wrentham, 1800.

† Sermon xii. p 292.

support of *the fact of native depravity*, with scarcely an allusion before to its consistency with moral agency. Instead of this, the task, which Dr. Woods had assigned himself, was, to prove that native depravity, in the sense in which it is understood by the orthodox, and was explained and defended in his Letters to unitarians, is not inconsistent with moral agency, as he had himself defined it, viz. "A moral agent is one, who acts under a moral law, and is *justly* accountable for his conduct."

He was required, then, to show, that a being, created with a nature wholly corrupt, inclined only to evil, and incapable of any good inclination or motion, until such inclination or motion is produced by an irresistible act of the spirit of God; incapable of being influenced by any good motive, so as to perform a single good action, until its nature is changed, which change can only be effected by the immediate agency of God, nothing that he can himself do having any tendency to produce the change, or to procure its being effected; that such a being is the proper subject of a law requiring perfect holiness, and exacting entire obedience under the penalty of the most awful punishments. He was thus to show, that a being may be *justly* required by its creator to do, what, in all the circumstances, in which it is placed, it is impossible for it to do; and that it will be just in him to punish it with everlasting misery for not doing it. I say, *what it is impossible for it to do*, because Dr. Woods has laboured abundantly to show the extreme absurdity of supposing any thing

good to proceed from a corrupt nature; "and that a wrong disposition, and sinfulness of heart, is as evidently presupposed in every particular sinful act, as the principle of gravitation is presupposed in every instance of a stone falling to the earth." Whether this has been done in a satisfactory manner, and agreeably to those principles of justice, which we apply in other cases, the reader will now judge.

The notice, which I have had occasion to take in this letter, of passages and sentiments which seem not to be very reconcileable with each other, might justify me in reciprocating the sympathy so often and so tenderly expressed by Dr. Woods. I cannot, however, apply to him the remark, which he has applied to myself—"It is a little remarkable, that in a free investigation &c. he should let fall expressions so contrary to his own theory, and so consonant to ours." So far am I from thinking it remarkable that some such contradictions, as I have pointed out, should occur, that I think him entitled to great credit for the dexterity with which he has managed to avoid them as far as he has done. That so much of irreconcilable contradiction appears, is to be attributed, not to any want of acuteness or of care in the writer, but to a radical defect in the system. Whoever undertakes to support a system in violation of nature and truth, nature and truth will be avenged on him, by requiring him to entangle himself in absurdities and contradiction, and to adopt language, that is plainly at war with the doctrine, which he wishes to support.

LETTER VI.

Unfounded charge noticed. Equivocal use of words. Difference between human nature and individual personal character. Exceptionable manner of conducting the discussion. What it is to follow nature.

In the beginning of Chapter VIth, I am charged by Dr. Woods with having wholly neglected his reasoning upon several passages of scripture in his Vth Letter to unitarians, and with having satisfied myself with repeating the objection, which he had there endeavoured to answer. It was certainly not my intention to pass over any argument unnoticed, on which any reliance was placed; nor am I aware of having done it. Whether I have or not, in the present instance, it will be in your power to judge, by comparing the passage referred to in Dr. Woods' Vth Letter, with the whole of that part of my IIId Letter, which relates to it. You will indeed find the objection, which he had undertaken to answer, repeated; not, however, as is intimated, merely repeated, but accompanied with reasons for considering it as an objection, that still remains in full force.

I might be contented to rest the subject as it was there left; but as it is brought into view again, I will pursue it further, in order to show, that what has now been added by Dr. Woods gives no better support to the doctrine, than what he had said before.

I first call your attention to the reasoning on pp. 115, 116, where you might not readily perceive, unless reminded of it, that the whole turns upon the equivocal use of the phrase *human nature*. It is there used, as if it were a phrase equivalent in its import to *human character*, which is assuming

the main point in dispute. The great question between us is, whether sinfulness is a natural or an acquired state,—a character which is born with us, or formed in us afterward. Is there no account to be given of that variety, which appears in the characters of men, but by attributing it "to the different circumstances in which they are placed, and the different combination of causes under which they act, or resorting to the supposition of a corresponding difference of original character?" I expect to be able, in its proper place, to show, that there is another alternative; and that beings alike by nature, and placed in similar circumstances, as to all that is external to them, may yet have an inherent principle of activity, in the free exercise of which, all that variety of moral character may be formed, which appears in the great human family. The question here is not, whether human nature is *the same* in all, or as different as the different characters of men; but *what* it is,—whether totally inclined to evil, or originally free from any greater inclination to evil than to good. The latter is what we maintain; and we account for the variety of character which soon appears, not by recurring to an original corresponding difference of nature, nor by the supposition of a necessary influence of external circumstances, nor yet by that of the direct and immediate operation of the spirit of God; but by a principle of intellectual and moral activity in men, in the free exercise of which, with different degrees of attention, in circumstances in all other respects similar, they take different directions, and arrive at

all that diversity, which we see in the world. We are not obliged, therefore, to suppose, that "Pharaoh, Jeroboam, and Judas had originally a moral nature as much worse than Moses, David, and Paul, as their ultimate characters were worse." That their ultimate characters differed so widely, is to be attributed to a difference in the use or neglect of their several intellectual and moral faculties, and of the circumstances in which they were placed, in which use or neglect they were voluntary, active, and free. Their nature, as moral beings, *was originally the same.* Their nature as intellectual beings *may, or may not have been the same.* Probably it was not. Their circumstances, as respects the temptations to which they were exposed, and the motives of conduct, which were offered to their minds, *may* have been the same, although probably they were not in reality; and yet the moral liberty which each possessed, the power of attending or not attending, of choosing or refusing, of giving any direction to his activity, at every moment, in every stage of his being, under every circumstance of action, may have resulted in the entirely opposite moral characters, which they exhibited at last. With this view of the subject you will be able to make a just estimate of the force of the singular reply to the question I had proposed, by way of appeal from the opinion which Dr. Woods had before expressed, "Whether Pharaoh, Jeroboam, and Judas were, as he had declared, fair examples and representations of human nature." His reply is, "Yes, for had they any nature but the

human? If they were not examples of human nature, of what nature were they examples? Of some nature above or below it?" Dr. Woods should have perceived, that in the whole of this passage, and what is connected with it, he is involving himself and his reader in a mist, by confounding human nature with human character, and the nature of an individual with his acquired character. In all that was essential to constitute them human beings, that is, in all the common properties of man, Pharaoh, Jeroboam, and Judas were undoubtedly fair examples of human nature; but not in any thing, which belonged to their distinct personal character. With no more propriety can the unprincipled selfishness of Judas be mentioned, as a characteristic of human nature, than any peculiarity in the form of his body or the features of his countenance, by which he was personally distinguished. I might with as much propriety mention Moses, David and Paul, as examples and representatives of human nature; for, so far as moral character is in question, we have no more evidence, that they owed theirs to the special influence of the spirit of God, than that the others owed their opposite characters to a special influence. There is the same reason for believing, that in becoming pious, holy, and virtuous, they were acting according to the nature God had given them, as that the others were so in becoming impious and unholy. The character of each of them, as moral or immoral, holy or sinful, depends on the fact, that he acted freely, and that the result was the effect of his own free and voluntary agency.

But I repeat, that the individual and distinctive character of neither of them is to be considered, as a representative of human nature. They are examples of human nature only so far, as respects what they are in common with all men. And this extends not to their individual character, but is confined to faculties, passions, and affections, which exist alike in all.

You will be able also to estimate the real value of the strain of popular eloquence, which runs through some following pages, and is employed in a lively description of the manner, in which the sentiments I had expressed must affect the use and application of historical facts and descriptions, as lessons of general instruction. Nothing is more easy, than thus to turn an adversary's argument or opinion into ridicule by a broad caricature. And I know not how the ridicule can in any case be more fairly repelled, than by showing, how a similar strain of irony and sarcasm may be applied to the opposite sentiment on the same subject.

The occasion of the passage, to which I refer, was my maintaining in opposition to an assertion of Dr. Woods, that men of the most wicked and abandoned character are not to be considered as fair representatives of human nature. The reasons are, in the first place, that they are exceptions from the general character of men, rather than examples of it; and in the next, that their wickedness is no part of that nature, which they have in common with all; but what they have acquired, and by which, as being personal to them, they have become

distinguished from all the rest of their race. The position maintained by Dr. Woods in opposition to this, converts the whole race of men in all ages, and of every region of the earth, into one undistinguished mass of corruption and wickedness.

Now, if this be the true account of human nature, how false, I might say, following the strain, and imitating the spirit of Dr. Woods, have been our ideas of the characters and actions of men! and what injustice have we done them! We have been used to think with great abhorrence of the character of Cain, and to reprobate the envious and cruel spirit, by which he was actuated. But with how little reason! His character is but a fair representation of every man's, that lives. There is no man on earth, who would not have murdered his brother, in the same circumstances. There was no peculiar envy and malignity in him. Had Abel been placed in his situation and he in Abel's, he would have been the martyr and Abel the murderer. It was a great piece of inadvertency at least in the apostle John, and shows how imperfect a knowledge he had of the true doctrine respecting human nature, to single him out, as he has done, as a remarkable example of envy and cruelty.

How strangely, again, have we been accustomed to misconceive, and how deeply have we in our thoughts wronged the characters of the unfortunate sufferers in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah! There is not the slightest reason for supposing, that they were more wicked, than any other men, who have lived at any other place, in any period of the

world. Every man in the world, unless his nature has been totally changed from what it was, as he received it from the hand of the Creator, is as bad as the worst of them, and is ready to commit the same crimes. That Lot himself was exempted from the general destruction was not because he was any better than his neighbours. It was not on account of any thing God saw in him, that he was distinguished from them. He was selected by an act of sovereign grace from the midst of a society, all of whom were equally sinful, equally unworthy of favour, and equally deserving of punishment.

How unreasonable and unjust also have we been, in attributing uncommon degrees of depravity to those men, whose violence and tyranny have filled the world with misery, and whose pride, and ambition, and selfishness have brought ruin and desolation upon the nations of the earth. The Pharaohs, the Jeroboams, and the Neros ought to excite in us no peculiar feelings of disapprobation. They were no worse, than the very best of those, whom they oppressed and destroyed. David and Josiah, pious and conscientious as we have thought them, in their situation would have been as impious and as cruel; and as great oppressors and destroyers of mankind.

Let us have a care, too, how we allow ourselves to think and to speak of those unfortunate men, who, by our sanguinary laws, are consigned to imprisonment or the gallows for their crimes against society, such as murder, or robbery, or piracy; as if they were any worse than others; as if he, who yesterday expired on the gallows for the twentieth

robbery or murder he had committed, was any worse, in a moral point of view, than the victims of his relentless fury, the jury by whom he was convicted, the judge, who pronounced his condemnation, or any one of the legislators, who framed the law, under which he suffered. Alas! the history of those wretches informs us, (p. 125) "not only what was in those particular men, but what is in human nature,—what is in your nature and mine." In the last robber that was executed, every man may see an exact picture of himself.

There are exceptions, indeed, of persons, who have experienced a saving influence of the spirit of God upon their hearts, by which they are become holy, and are unlike and separated from the rest of the world. But they are few, and scarcely requiring to be mentioned or reckoned in the account. At the time of the deluge, it consisted only of eight persons—Noah and his family, out of the whole population of the world. All the rest were entirely and incurably wicked. But great and universal as the corruption of the world was, (p. 114) "we have no reason to think it greater at that time, than at any subsequent period, whether we consider the description of their character, the judgments of heaven they suffered, or the circumstances of their case." The wickedness of the world then, was a fair example of what it is always. In the destruction of Sodom, also, three righteous persons were saved. These formed the only exception to the most abandoned profligacy and corruption of manners. But we greatly mistake and wrong their

character, if we think that the Sodomites were by any means peculiarly wicked. They were but a fair representation of the character of mankind in every age, and in every country. The mass of that population resembled exactly, in a moral view, the mass of the population in every other age and country,—the most enlightened, refined, and pure. We deceive ourselves, if we imagine, that our neighbours and friends, and the society by which we are surrounded, are any better than those of Noah and Lot. Their thoughts, inclinations, and purposes, are as entirely bent on evil, as were those of the antediluvians or the Sodomites. They need only to be placed in similar circumstances in order to be guilty of the same atrocities, which brought down the vengeance of heaven upon them.

And with respect to the few exceptions there are to this universal depravity, into what mistakes have we fallen! By a strange neglect of the true meaning of the bible, and design of the gospel, we have been led to suppose, that he, "who fears God, and works righteousness, is accepted of him;" and wherever we have met with men, who seemed to be pious, humble, conscientious, faithful in the discharge of the duties they owe to God and man, whatever speculative opinions they might hold, we have considered them as entitled to our charity and good opinion. But with how little reason! It is not what men do, but what they believe; not the purity of their life, but the soundness of their faith, that will make them acceptable to God, and entitle them to the fellowship and good opinion of christians.

Now the true faith, by which the orthodox christian is distinguished, is the belief, that all men are by nature totally depraved, enemies to God, inclined only to evil, incapable of any good till regenerated by an influence, in which they have no agency and no choice; that a part of mankind were from eternity elected to everlasting life; that an atonement was made for those thus elected, without which their sins could not have been for given; that they are made holy by the irresistible grace of God, and that all the rest of mankind are left to perish, that influence being withheld, without which it was impossible for them to become holy and be saved. And as this is the true christian faith, how absurd to imagine, that any one can be a christian, who does not hold it! Those only who do hold it are brought out of darkness, and have received the true and saving light. They are separated from the rest, and like the families of Noah and Lot, in their times, constitute the only exception to the universal depravity. The rest, however sincere they may be in their endeavours, and faithful in their exertions, however amiable in their dispositions and blameless in their lives, yet being unsound in their faith, are not to be distinguished from the corrupt mass; since with all their shining virtues they have no just title to the christian name, and if not to the *name*, surely not to the *privileges*, *blessings* and *hopes* of christians, holding as they do another gospel.

I hope the reader will not mistake me, by supposing that I have meant the few last pages to be taken for serious argument. It is with reluctance that I have allowed myself so far to violate the

decorum I had intended to observe, as to adopt a strain of levity, which may be thought not perfectly becoming the gravity of the subject, and which can give very little satisfaction to the serious mind. I have resorted to it only to show of how little avail that can be on either side of a subject, which may so easily be turned to the other.

I had asked,* "Why the cruelty and obstinacy of Pharaoh, rather than the meekness and humanity of Moses; why the idolatry, and unprincipled ambition, and selfishness of Jeroboam, rather than the piety, tenderness of conscience, and public spirit of Josiah; why the single wretch who was so base and sordid as to sell and betray his master, rather than the eleven, who were true and faithful to him, should be selected as specimens of the race to which they belong, and the great community, of which they make a part." To this Dr. Woods replies, (p. 127) "that all these vices and iniquities are the natural spontaneous growth of human nature. They are what the apostle calls the fruits of the flesh; of that flesh, which, according to John iii. 6. belongs to us by our natural birth; while the virtues enumerated, are the fruits of the spirit, or the effects of that divine influence, by which men are delivered from their natural character, and made new creatures," &c. This answer, as I shall endeavour to show, is grounded on a misunderstanding of the phraseology of scripture in the passages referred to, and others, in which the same terms are employed in a similar manner.

* Letters to Trinitarians &c. p. 38.

By attending to the use of the terms *flesh* and *spirit*, and the phrases, *works of the flesh* and *works of the spirit*, *carnal* and *fleshly mind*, and *spiritual mind*, *carnal mindedness* or the *minding of the flesh*, and *spiritual mindedness* or the *minding of the spirit*, as these several forms of expression, and others of similar import occur in the New Testament, it will be found, that they are employed not to distinguish what is natural to man from what is not; but to distinguish one part of the nature and constitution of man from another part. Both of them are equally natural. There is a fleshly and a spiritual part in the human constitution, each of them equally a part of his nature, and recognized as such in the sacred writings. The one expresses his animal, the other his intellectual and moral nature. The former consists of the passions and appetites, which, ill directed and improperly indulged, lead into all sin; and the latter of reason and conscience, which lead to holiness and virtue. The actual personal character of each man depends on his following either of these opposite parts of his nature. He is accordingly a bad or a good man, holy or sinful; not in proportion as he *has* that, which constitutes his animal, or intellectual and moral nature; but as he *suffers himself to be guided and controlled* by the one or the other. The sinner is not one who has by nature more than others of that principle, from which all corruption and wickedness proceeds; but who suffers himself to be led by it, and enslaved. The good or holy man, on the other hand, is not one, who has less by nature of the animal prin-

ciple, than others; but who prefers, and follows the spiritual part. Thus the sinner is justly blamed, and blames himself, not for what he is by nature, but for what he has rendered himself by the abuse and perversion of nature; and the good man is approved, and enjoys self-approbation in the consciousness of having resisted the influence of the fleshly, and obeyed the spiritual part of his nature.

There is accordingly no more propriety in speaking of sinners, as being in a state of nature, than in saying that holy men are in a state of nature. He who follows after holiness and righteousness as truly follows nature, as he who indulges the sinful affections. It is only the lower part of our nature that leads to sin; the higher leads to goodness and virtue. The flesh, which prompts us to disobey God, is no more a part of our nature, than the spirit, which prompts us to obey him; the passions and appetites, which war against the soul, than reason and conscience, which exalt and perfect it, and bring it to some resemblance of the author of its being. I know not, indeed, how a sentiment could be uttered, more unworthy of the Author of nature, than to assert, that the constitution of his moral government and that of his moral creation are such, that the vicious man may be said to follow nature, and that the virtuous man does not; that the former is to be regarded as a fair example of what human nature is, and what it leads to, and that the latter is not.

The truth is, and it is a most important one, that no man so truly follows nature, as he, who, submit-

ting to the guidance and control of the higher faculties and powers of his constitution, the intellectual and moral, obeys the God of nature, and rises to that elevation of virtue, to which those higher principles naturally conduct him. He, on the other hand, who rebels against reason, disregards the voice of conscience, and becomes a voluntary slave to the senses and passions, may, with much more propriety, be said to violate, than to follow nature.

Much of our language, and many of the forms of expression, which we apply to the good and bad conduct of men, is formed upon this idea. We speak of acts of cruelty, ingratitude, oppression, as *unnatural, inhuman*, that is, as what nature does not lead to nor approve, and what does not belong to the human character. A parent, for example, who manifests no love for his offspring, but treats it with neglect or unkindness, is regarded as *unnatural*. We think and speak of him as a monster; not as a specimen of human nature, but as an exception to it; and we accordingly apply to him, not the term *human*, but *inhuman*. The same epithets we universally apply to him, who treats with cruelty his slave or his beast. We regard him as having divested himself of the attributes of humanity, and thus justly forfeited its name and privileges. Nor is this use of language confined to positive acts. We apply it to any remarkable defect of the feelings of tenderness, sympathy and compassion; and we represent him as wanting in *humanity*, that is, in the peculiar attributes of

human nature, who can see the sufferings of his fellow beings without pity, and without a wish to relieve them. The crime which Cain committed, and those by which the Sodomites were distinguished, have been branded in all ages, and in all languages, with the epithet of *unnatural*. It is only in the language of orthodoxy, that they are honoured with a more flattering title, and one which implies their being acts of obedience to the law of their nature; and he, by whom they are practised, is allowed to have the consoling reflection, that his conduct is what nature teaches and prompts.

LETTER VII.

Charge of inconsistency considered. Propensity to sin implies no guilt. Guilt consists in yielding to it. Proper ground of blame or ill desert. Consistent with a constitution fitted to be wrought upon by temptation. Consistent with the divine foreknowledge.

In the beginning of the VIIth Chapter occurs another instance, in which Dr. Woods indulges in his favourite mode of conducting the controversy, by endeavouring to show that his adversary is inconsistent with himself, in some of the expressions he has employed. With careless readers, who look no further than to perceive that there is a verbal contradiction in the passages, that are brought in comparison together; and never give themselves the trouble of examining the subject, so as to ascertain, whether the apparent contradiction be a real one, this will pass for a triumphant advantage in the argument; when a careful exam-

ination, would not only remove all appearance of inconsistency, by making it clear, that the meaning of the writer had been mistaken; but show also that although it were real, and as great as it is represented, it would be of no importance to the argument.

In the present instance, after stating the alleged inconsistency with his usual strength of colouring, he subjoins, with a commendable degree of tenderness, "I hope the reader will not attribute these contradictions to the fault of Dr. Ware's understanding."

The import of an expression of this kind is perfectly well understood, and I am far from complaining of it, as conveying an implication, that is not warranted by the usage of polemic writers; but it renders it necessary for me to restate the case, so that you may be able to judge correctly, whether it were the understanding of the writer, or that of the reader and commentator, that was, in this case, at fault.

The inconsistency, with which I am charged, is this, that having in several places in my Letters said, "that men do not possess by their birth that character of personal holiness, which is necessary to their being christians," I do yet (p. 47) affirm, "that those, who are now born into the world in christian lands are, as the Ephesians were after their conversion to christianity, *saved, quickened, fellow citizens of the saints.*"

Now, in order to make the passage last quoted inconsistent with the others, you will perceive, I

must be understood, as using the phrases, *saved, quickened, &c.* as expressing, that they were the subjects of *personal holiness.* I request you, therefore, to turn to the page referred to in my Letters. You will there find, that I was so far from using those phrases in the sense asserted, or in any equivocal or uncertain sense; that I was direct and explicit in asserting the contrary. "This language of the apostle," I observed, p. 46, "like much of that in the epistles, referring to the same subject, relates to men, *as bodies of men, not as individuals.*" And p. 47. "The whole of this refers to the same thing; *not to the personal condition of individuals as such, but to that of the whole body of christians*— made to sit together in heavenly places, that is, *to enjoy all the privileges and hopes of christians.*" The question here, as respects the charge of inconsistency, is not whether this is the true meaning of that passage of scripture; but whether it was the meaning, in which it was used and applied by me. You will accordingly judge, whether, with so distinct an exposition of my meaning on the very page before him, Dr. Woods was justified in insisting, that I did use the phrases in question and apply them, as expressing personal holiness.

I cannot suppose any reply necessary, to the strain of irony and sarcasm, which, having been indulged through the VIth Chapter, prevailed in the author's mind at the beginning of the VIIth. I think it sufficient to refer you to those parts of my Letters, which are alluded to, in order to your being able to judge of its justice.

The author says, (p. 135) "I hope Dr. Ware will reconsider what he has written respecting a propensity to sin, viz. that the propensity itself is no sin, and implies no guilt." I have reviewed the passage, and find no reason for changing the opinion, which I there expressed. The sentence, as it stands in the quotation, accompanied with Dr. Woods' comments, may seem to you exceptionable; but if you will turn to the passage in which it stands, and read it in connexion with that part of the paragraph, which precedes it, I am confident you will think it expresses the truth. I think it possible, indeed, that in this case, there is no real difference of opinion between us on the subject; and that the dispute relates only to the proper meaning of a word, and not to the correctness of an opinion. Dr. Woods and myself may annex different ideas to the word *propensity*.

In the sense in which I understand the word, the essence of sin does not "consist in propensity, inclination, or disposition to sin;" but in yielding to that propensity,—in following the inclination or disposition to sin. This may be illustrated by examples. A man has a strong propensity to any kind of excess. He becomes criminal only in proportion as he yields to it. If he does not yield to it, but preserves temperance and moderation, he is reckoned the more meritorious, in proportion to the strength of the propensity, which he has had the virtue to resist. But according to the principle maintained by Dr. Woods, he who feels a strong inclination to sin, though he resists it, is

more guilty than another, who, with less inclination, yields to it and commits the sin; for "the inclination is the essence of sin, and the only thing which makes any outward action or any volition sinful." He, for example, who, with a strong propensity to intemperance, constantly restrains his appetite, is more faulty than his neighbour, who, with a less importunate appetite for the intoxicating draught, yet allows himself in habitual drunkenness. The man also, who, with great irritability of temper and strength of passion continually prompting him to acts of violence, yet holds himself under habitual restraint, and abstains from all deeds of violence, is, notwithstanding, upon the same principle, more criminal than another, who, of a cooler natural temperament, exercises no self-government, and allows himself in habitual peevishness, or cruelty, or violence in the common intercourse of life. A deliberate cold-blooded murder, also, may imply less guilt than a homicide committed under the immediate impulse of sudden passion; and he who, at the call of false honour, coolly goes forth to dip his sword in the blood of his friend, incurs less guilt than he, who, under circumstances of extreme provocation, is excited to a high degree of resentment and wrath, yet, under the influence of conscience and the fear of God, is restrained from executing vengeance on the object of his resentment.

The fact is, that guilt or sinfulness consists not in temptation, but in yielding to it. This is as true of internal, as of external temptation. Now propen-

sity, inclination, or disposition to sin are nothing else, but internal temptations. They are no other, than modifications of the appetites, affections, and passions. But these, whatever be their strength, imply no guilt, until they are indulged in circumstances, in which virtue requires their restraint. Thus a strong appetite for intoxicating liquor constitutes a propensity to intemperance. But he, who, restraining such appetite, is habitually temperate, though the appetite remain in all its irritating force, is in a high degree meritorious. Where there is extreme irritability of temper, and quick sensibility to wrongs, there is always a strong disposition to revenge. But he who is withheld by the fear of God from yielding to those irritations, to which he is constitutionally subject, and religiously abstains from acts of revenge, is not only free from guilt, but is even intitled to higher praise, than another, who, with cooler passions, and less propensity to violence, requires a less vigorous exercise of the virtuous principle to preserve him from excess.

In the paragraph next succeeding that, which gave occasion to the last remarks, I am happy to acknowledge my obligations to Dr. Woods for setting me right respecting the opinion of Calvinists, as to the design and tendency of divine punishments. I am glad to be informed, that a sentiment, which I have sometimes heard expressed, and which, indeed, seemed to me to make a necessary part of the Calvinistic system, is generally disavowed by the orthodox; and that they do "consider the

punishments of this life as disciplinary—as having a real tendency to reform the wicked,—a tendency which, in many cases, is effectual."

But in the latter part of the same paragraph there occurs a singular misrepresentation of the sentiment I had expressed. It is said, p. 136, "We cannot accede to Dr. Ware's notion, that *disciplinary* punishment may be inflicted by a righteous and benevolent God, without real ill desert in those who suffer." Now, by turning to pp. 48 and 49 of my Letters, you will perceive, that instead of *asserting*, I expressly *deny that there can be any just punishment, where there is no ill desert.* In the passage (p. 50) upon which I suppose the charge must have been founded, you will see that I was reasoning on the principles of my opponent, and upon those principles, my express assertion was, that "suffering could not be inflicted by a just being *as punishment.*" I admitted, that suffering might be brought upon beings, who had incurred no moral guilt, *by way of discipline.* Whether the term *discipline* was used with perfect propriety, is another question. But explained as it there is, there was no room for the most careless reader to mistake the sense, in which it was used. What was the *sentiment*, that I meant to express, there could be no doubt; whatever doubt might be raised, as to the propriety of the term, by which it was expressed. But it is with the *sentiment* that I am charged, a sentiment explicitly disavowed by me in the very terms, in which the charge is expressed and on the page referred to.

With respect to the use which I make of the term *discipline*, as distinguished from punishment, I suppose it to be authorized by common usage. The term is applied in numerous cases, where it has no reference to punishment, and where no ill desert is implied. It is applied to all the means that are used in an army to produce military order, and to form the habits of the soldier. To all that is done in a place of education in forming the intellectual habits of the scholar,—strengthening his faculties, and correcting his judgment and taste. We apply the term *discipline* to all those restrictions, which a man imposes upon himself, his child, or his pupil, for the purpose of forming a useful habit, or correcting one that is hurtful, where ill desert and punishment make no part of the idea, and a moral effect no part of the purpose; but a physical effect or intellectual improvement only is intended. Dr. Woods has doubtless often subjected himself voluntarily to a severe discipline, where he was yet not conscious of deserving punishment. Why will he not then allow me the privilege of supposing a discipline employed to effect some good purpose, where there was no ill desert, and where punishment could not be inflicted with justice? At any rate, whether the distinction which I make between *discipline* and *punishment* be admitted to be correct or not, I must claim the right of having my words understood and interpreted in the sense in which I expressly declare that they are used by me.

At the close of this Chapter, the defence of the doctrine of depravity is placed upon a new ground,

viz. that it involves no greater difficulty, as respects the principle of the divine government, than the system which is opposed to it.

The difficulty charged upon the orthodox doctrine, which is intended to be removed upon this ground is, "that it ascribes human wickedness to the agency of God, and traces sin to that constitution, which was given us by our Maker." Dr. Woods admits the difficulty in the terms in which it is stated ;* but alleges, that it is no greater, than is involved in the opposite system ; that is, that the opposite scheme, as really as the orthodox doctrine of native depravity, ascribes human wickedness to the agency of God. What he has said to prove this is what follows, viz. "Men's falling into sin at any period of their life is a thing, as really to be ascribed to the operation of their Maker, or to the constitution he has given them, as *native* sinfulness. For suppose that a man, influenced by strong temptation, at any time, fall into sin. Who gave him a constitution of mind fitted to be wrought upon by temptation? And who ordered things so, that he should be exposed to temptation, and to those particular temptations, which prevail to draw him into sin? Did not God know the result beforehand? Was it not a result which naturally flowed from causes, which God directed and controlled, operating upon a moral nature, which he created, and according to laws, which he established? The

* Why he should call them *offensive* terms, however, at the same time, that he admits that they express the truth, and does not pretend that they express any thing more than the truth, I am unable to see.

question I would ask him to solve is, *how, in such a case, there can be any blame?*"

The question here asked, I hold myself bound to answer, and further to show, that it does not admit of an answer equally satisfactory, on the other side. I expect to be able also to show, that the simple foreknowledge of the Deity does not invalidate the answer. The question is, "how a being can be blameable for actions performed with a constitution of mind, fitted to be wrought upon by temptation, with things so ordered, that he should be exposed to temptation, and to those particular temptations which prevail to draw him into sin; God at the same time knowing beforehand the result." Or, as otherwise expressed, "How can there be any blame in a result, which naturally flowed from causes, which God directed and controlled, operating upon a moral nature, which he created, and according to laws, which he established?" The true answer is suggested in one of the terms, that is made use of in the statement of the question; viz. "causes operating on *a moral nature.*" To him, who is accustomed to reasoning on moral subjects and to distinguishing between *moral* and *physical* causes and effects; the answer suggested, I think, will be intelligible and satisfactory. It is by overlooking this consideration of *a moral nature* in man, and reasoning upon the subject, as if he were governed in his actions only by physical laws, that the discussion has been involved in so much difficulty and confusion.

The question may be resolved into the following distinct propositions, in which the difficulty is presented in its full force, viz. *A man falls into sin, under the influence of a strong temptation. It was God, who gave him a constitution of mind fitted to be wrought upon by temptation. It was God, who ordered things so, that he should be exposed to the temptation. And God knew beforehand what would be the result.* Let us now see in which of the above propositions the difficulty lies.

It will not, I presume, be pretended, that any part of the difficulty lies in the first proposition taken separately. The simple fact, that sin was committed under the influence of temptation, I suppose, will by none be considered as taking away guilt, removing the ground of blame, or affecting in any way the reasonableness of his being held answerable in a moral view for his conduct.

But *God gave him that constitution of mind, by which he was fitted to be wrought upon by temptation.* I ask in what manner is the constitution of man fitted to be wrought upon? If the meaning is, *wrought upon by a physical necessity*, and *in a mechanical manner*, there is, indeed, no room for praise or blame, and no foundation for moral distinctions in character. But if a *moral influence* only is intended, it will be otherwise. What then is the constitution of the mind in question, upon which temptation is to operate?

We are adapted to a certain state of being, and fitted for a certain course of action by a corporeal and intellectual organization, consisting of

the senses, and the passions and affections, on the one hand; and reason, on the other, comprehending all the intellectual faculties. The senses, together with the several appetites, and also the passions and affections, being necessary parts of our nature, having each of them objects suited to them, and each in its original structure, purpose, and tendency, being directed to some good, must each, within certain limits in their exercise, be consistent with innocence and virtue.

But in order to answer their design, they all exist, in their natural state, with such a degree of strength, that they may become the instruments or occasion of evil instead of good, to ourselves or to others. They may thus produce effects contrary to their original design and natural tendency, by being directed to improper objects, or to suitable objects unseasonably or in an improper degree. Still, whatever evils were thus produced, and whatever disorders and disproportions were thus introduced into the system, no guilt could be incurred, and there would be no foundation for our being considered as proper subjects of blame, unless these parts of our constitution were connected in our make with other faculties, by which we should be rendered capable of perceiving the tendency and the moral character of our actions. Such faculties we have. To execute these offices, we have reason and conscience. By these, we are capable of knowing, within what limits the lower faculties may be followed, and when they are to be restrained; what are the bounds of right, and what

are the consequences of keeping within, or transgressing those bounds. We have thus not only a sense of interest connected with our course of conduct, but also a sense of duty and obligation; and we become the just subjects of praise or blame, according as we follow or neglect our light. This moral responsibility, however, supposes always a power of choice as well as a power of discernment, as to the tendency and the character of actions. It supposes, that appetite and passion are not irresistible. Were there no power of choosing between yielding to the impulse of sense and passion, and obeying the voice of reason and conscience, there would be no more room for praise or blame, as there could be no more just foundation for either, in good or ill desert, than in the clock obeying the weights or springs that are to direct its motions, or the ship following the combined action of sails and rudder, by which it is impelled and directed.

There is then a power, not belonging to any piece of mere mechanism, by which man is rendered an accountable being. The influences by which his actions are governed are of another kind, and operate by other laws, than those, by which physical effects and mechanical motion are produced. The appetites and passions on the one hand, and reason and conscience on the other, are not to be regarded merely as opposite powers operating against each other upon mechanical principles; so that if you know the exact force of each, you can calculate with certainty the effect that will be produced. There is yet further, (and it is this,

that makes the most important point of difference between physical and moral causes and effects;) another power to be taken into the account,—the agent, or being itself, who, being the subject of these influences, and acted upon by these opposite powers, is yet to be active himself in obeying the one and in resisting the other.

Now an agent implies a principle of activity,—a power of acting—not merely of being acted upon. It is not like a pivot, upon which opposite weights are balanced, and which can exert no power over the weights themselves. An intelligent agent possesses a power of modifying the influences of the several powers, on both sides, by which it is acted upon, in such a manner, that with the same constitution, as respects the strength of the appetites and passions, and the power of reason, and knowledge of right and wrong; and also in the same external circumstances of temptation, the course of conduct may not be the same. He has the power of choosing between different courses that are presented, and of yielding to the influence of either of two opposite motives, to the action of which he is exposed. The cause, therefore, of this difference is the moral power of the agent himself, or the power he has over the determinations of his own will. The same remarks apply to the next proposition also, viz. *It was God, who ordered things so, that he should be exposed to the temptation.*

We have here then arrived at what I consider as supplying a distinct answer to the question proposed. The sinner is to be blamed, and is con-

scious of deserving blame, though he acted under the influence of strong temptation, though God gave him a constitution of mind, fitted to be wrought upon by temptation, and though he ordered things so, that he should be exposed to the particular temptation, which prevailed to draw him into sin. He is conscious, I observe, of ill desert, because he is conscious of having been not only voluntary in the sinful act, but free; that he had the liberty of choosing or not choosing the sinful act, and the power of actually using that liberty by directing his choice to either of the alternatives. He deserves blame for allowing the wrong motive to influence his conduct, when, as a free agent, it was in his power to submit to the influence of either the right or wrong one.

But can this be said with truth upon the opposite hypothesis? According to the orthodox doctrine of depravity, the natural propensity or inclination to sin in man is irresistible, until his nature is changed by irresistible grace. The sinner, then, having no freedom of choice, and no power of resisting the force, by which he is impelled by natural inclination, there is no possibility of his acting otherwise, than he does act; and this impossibility is not that, which consists merely in the *abstract certainty of the event*, which, as we shall by and by see, would not affect either his freedom or his accountability; but on a supposed necessary connexion between an appointed constitution of things, and the effects that are to follow from it. By this scheme, the sins of men are certainly ascribed to the agency of God in a sense, in which they cannot be ascribed with any propriety,

according to that, which I have now explained; and it is thus encumbered with a moral difficulty, from which that is free.

But it may be imagined, that the force of what has now been said is impaired, if not wholly destroyed by the consideration, that the result, i. e. the manner in which the sinner will act, *is known beforehand by God.* And it is accordingly objected, that if we admit, that the whole constitution of man, physical, intellectual, and moral, is the work of God; that the circumstances of temptation, under which each individual is placed, are his appointment, extending to the particular temptations, which actually prevail to draw him into sin; and finally, that what will be the result is also foreknown; the difficulty of reconciling this with his being justly accountable for actions thus performed is as great, as upon the supposition, that he was created with a natural inclination to sin and sin only, over which he has no control, and which he has no power to change, nor can do any thing, which has any tendency to procure a change to be wrought in his nature.

But between these cases there is an obvious and important difference. In the one case, a *necessity* is supposed as real and as absolute, as physical force; in the other, there may be, for any thing that is expressed or implied in the proposition, *no necessity at all.* On the contrary, the powers which we have stated as belonging to the moral nature of man, clearly imply, that *there is no such necessity.*

The foreknowledge of God implies the *abstract*

certainty of the event foreknown, and it implies nothing more. Simply considered, it has no relation to the means by which it is brought about, and does not imply any agency in it. God's foreknowledge of an event no more implies an agency of his, exerted in bringing it to pass, than our knowledge of its *present* existence implies our agency in it, or that we are the cause of it. Your knowledge, that I am now performing a right or wrong action, implies the certainty of the fact, but nothing more. Though it is obviously impossible for the fact not to be, which is thus known to exist, yet it is certain, that the knowledge of its existence implies nothing with respect to freedom or necessity in its performance. But it were as correct to say, that *your present certain knowledge* of the act I am performing gives you an agency in it, makes you chargeable with its guilt, if it be a criminal act, and relieves me from moral responsibility for it; as to assert, that simply its being foreknown by God implies any such divine agency, as is not reconcileable with moral freedom; or that the agent, on that account, ceases to be a proper subject of blame and of punishment.

There is another manner of viewing the subject, which may serve to illustrate it, and enable us to perceive more clearly, that the *abstract certainty* of a future event, which is implied in its being foreknown, does not infer its necessity, or any such divine agency in it, as to render the human agent less accountable. It is this; that upon the supposition of that moral freedom, which I maintain to be

the true ground upon which man is justly accountable for his actions, deserving of praise or blame, and a proper subject of reward and punishment; every action of every human being is as certain, before it is performed, as afterward. Suppose men to have that liberty, which the scheme that I advocate attributes to them, it is as certain beforehand, how they will act, as upon the scheme of necessity; that is, it is absolutely certain how they will in fact use that freedom. And speaking of it merely as an abstract truth, we may say, it is impossible that they should not use their freedom as they actually will use it.

This is rendered clear and intelligible by considering any action or event as already past. The murder, which was perpetrated yesterday, upon the supposition, that the murderer acted with perfect moral freedom, was as certain the day before, as the day after the deed was done. The *certainty* was the same, as if he were impelled by a moral or even a physical necessity. And if the *necessity* were the same, he would be as blameless, as the dagger, with which he performed the deed. I admit the consistency, while I abhor the doctrine, (and shudder at its immoral tendency,) of those philosophers who assert, that upon the principle of necessity, it is as absurd to *blame*, in the common acceptation of the term *blame*, the assassin, as the dirk or pistol. Each was alike the necessary and the blameless instrument, and in no proper sense the agent, in no such sense as to be the reasonable subject of blame, or justly deserving of punishment.

In the just and important sentiment expressed with great strength and propriety by Dr. Woods in the concluding sentence of this chapter, I join with my whole soul. "The habit of attributing moral evil to God in such a way, as to destroy or diminish its criminality is, in my view, one of the worst habits, of which the human mind is capable. It produces alarming stupidity of conscience and hardness of heart, and leads to the most destructive fatalism."

It is under this impression, that I feel the importance of establishing and rendering intelligible the doctrine of moral freedom both in opposition to philosophical necessity, and to the theological doctrine of predestination; believing it to be, notwithstanding difficulties with which the subject is confessedly encumbered, the truth. I feel the more earnest on the subject, because, however some may be able to reconcile philosophical necessity with the doctrine, that man is accountable for his actions, it does certainly lead many, and to me it seems by a very natural and just process of reasoning, "to the most destructive fatalism." This tendency of the doctrine is not assigned as a reason for rejecting it, nor for believing in the truth of philosophical liberty. Our acceptance of either doctrine should stand on its own proper evidence. But it is a good reason for examining very faithfully the evidences of a doctrine, which, to say the least, is not readily seen to be reconcileable with a moral and accountable state; and for being willing to allow their due value to any considerations, which may be fairly urged in support of the opposite opinion.

LETTER VIII.

Practical importance of the question respecting depravity. Moral influence and tendency of the orthodox doctrine correctly stated by Dr. Woods. Moral tendency of the opposite doctrine. An incorrect representation of dangerous moral tendency noticed. Unitarian method of addressing men. Orthodox method.

The discussion of the subject of native depravity is closed, in the VIIIth Chapter of the book before me, by an examination of its practical importance.

The practical importance of any doctrine is exactly commensurate with its practical tendency and influence. This is usually much exaggerated by polemic writers. Speculative opinions have generally far less influence upon the conduct of life, than those, who have employed much time and study upon them, as subjects of controversy, are ready to imagine. But as respects the present subject of discussion, I do not know, that the practical importance of the question has been overstated. We may certainly expect, that opposite doctrines, which relate to points, by which the motives of conduct are directly affected, will have a widely different influence upon practice. We can hardly imagine, that a visible difference of character should not be produced by the serious belief of the orthodox doctrine of human nature and the human condition, from that which is produced by the unitarian.

The tendency of the orthodox doctrine I suppose to be truly and correctly stated by Dr. Woods in the following passage. (p. 141) "Those who seriously believe themselves and others to be the subjects of a native and entire depravity, must be

convinced, that a mighty operation of divine power is necessary to make them holy. They must view it as indispensable; that they should be born again. Passing by human efforts, and all slight, common remedies, as totally inadequate, they must found every hope of moral purification on that energy of God, which gives men a new heart, and a new spirit,—which creates them in Christ Jesus unto good works." The tendency here attributed to the doctrine, next to its want of evidence, constitutes, in my mind, the most insuperable objection to it. For it seems to me, that it must lead, on the one hand, to groundless expectations, and a false dependance, and on the other to the neglect of all moral exertion, and of the use of the proper means of recovery to holiness and the divine favor. For, to what course does the sinner find himself here directed? Not to any exertion to deliver himself from the bondage of sin, and save himself from the wrath to come. Not a syllable is said to encourage such exertion; but on the contrary, it is strongly implied, that all such exertion must be utterly useless and unavailing. The only hope he is allowed to entertain is *in a mighty operation of divine power, which is necessary to make him holy.* And how is he to become the subject of this mighty operation? Is there any thing, that he is directed to do, or has the power of doing, with the hope, that it will be the means of his obtaining it, or that it will be the reason or the occasion of its being granted to him? By no means. In granting or withholding it, God is sovereign and inde-

pendent, and has no respect to any thing, that he sees in the creature. No desert, and no effort of his, will make any part of the reason or cause, for which it is granted. It will be given to those, and to those only, who are, by an unconditional act of election, appointed to eternal life. Upon those, and only those, will that regenerating influence be shed, by which they are to be *born again, to have a new heart, and a new spirit given them, and to be created in Christ Jesus unto good works.* They are not directed,—they are not indeed permitted, to seek for this renovating influence, by which they are to be sanctified and saved, by prayer. For until they are renewed and sanctified by this influence from above, they cannot pray acceptably. Every prayer they utter as well, as every action they perform, is sinful,—an abomination to God, and must serve to sink them still deeper in guilt. There is accordingly, in the statement above, no intimation, that the sinner feels himself called upon or authorized by the orthodox faith, to use any means, or make any efforts to recover himself from a state of guilt, and rise to holiness and virtue. The contrary, indeed, is too distinctly implied to be misunderstood. *Passing by human efforts*, it is said, *as totally inadequate, he must found every hope of moral purification on that energy of God, which is to give him a new heart, and a new spirit.* His hope then, and the only hope he is encouraged to entertain, is, that this will be done for him, and wrought in him. But he has no encouragement to pray, that this

may be done for him. It would be inconsistent with a fundamental principle of the system, which supposes him, until that renovating and sanctifying influence has actually been given, inclined only to evil, wholly wrong in his moral affections and actions,—incapable therefore of a purpose, or wish, or prayer, that would be acceptable to God. To pray then for that mighty influence, which is to renew and sanctify him, is among *those human efforts, which he passes by,* in the same manner as he does all others, waiting for it to be exerted upon him independently of all such efforts.

I know that language very different from this was formerly held by Calvinistic divines. They directed sinners to pray, and called upon them to exert themselves, and to use the means of reformation. There are probably those, who do so now, not attending very accurately to its consistency with the speculative opinions they have adopted. Not so the author of the Reply. He understands too well what the system requires, to intimate, that the sinner has any thing to do, any effort to make, any prayer to offer, until this mighty influence has come upon him. *All human efforts are to be passed by, until this has taken place.*

In thus stating the practical tendency of the orthodox doctrine of depravity, our author cannot be suspected of exaggeration or misrepresentation. Yet in my apprehension it is a tendency of an extremely hurtful and immoral nature. Can it be otherwise, for wicked men to be allowed to think, that there is nothing for them to do, until some-

thing is done for them? that no effort is to be made, not even a prayer offered up by them, until they are conscious of being the subjects of that mighty energy of God, which is to give them a new heart and a new spirit? that the sinner should feel himself authorized to treat with neglect all the common influences of the spirit of God, as of no value, relying on a special influence, by which he is to be distinguished, and which cannot be resisted?

Let me request you to place in comparison with this the moral tendency and practical influence of the doctrine, which is directly opposite to it.

According to the system, the tendency and influence of which I wish you now to contemplate, the sinner is taught to regard his sinfulness, as consisting solely in his personal and acquired moral character. He considers himself as guilty before God, deserving of punishment, standing in need of mercy, and requiring to be renewed by repentance, and changed from sin to holiness; not by the constitution of his nature, but by his voluntary violation of the laws, which God had, in the constitution of his nature, imposed upon him. As the guilt of which he is conscious is only that, which he has brought upon himself by his own act or his own neglect, he believes, that his own act only can restore him; and that he is not to expect that to be done for him, which it is his duty to do for himself. He accordingly looks not for a mighty influence, which, without his desire, or will, or effort, is to change his nature. He believes, that God has already done all, that was necessary on his part;

and that nothing is now wanting, but for him to exert the strength which is given him, and to employ faithfully the means, which are put into his hands, to do something for himself. So far is he from thinking it his duty, *to pass by all human efforts*, and indolently or presumptuously wait for that to be done for him, which he is commanded to do for himself, that he considers his guilt as greatly enhanced, and the more inexcusable, by every moment's delay to make those efforts. He places in the fidelity of those efforts his *whole hope* of the favor and acceptance of God; believing, that the consciousness of making those efforts will be the only reasonable ground he can have for expecting to become the subject of that change, which will secure them to him; and that *to pass by* or neglect to make *those efforts*, is constantly to add to his guilt, to lessen the probability of his recovery, and to cut off the hope of final forgiveness and the acceptance and favor of heaven.

Instead of undervaluing what God has already done for him, as being of no use, unless something more be done; instead of neglecting that common grace, which is bestowed upon all, and consists in the means and motives of religion, and waiting for that special grace, by which he is to be distinguished from others, and by which the great work is to be done for him and wrought in him; he is grateful for the provisions God has made for his deliverance from the dominion of sin, and recovery to holiness and virtue; he believes them to be sufficient for the purpose,—that nothing further is

needed, but for him to accept and use them; that he shall be utterly inexcusable, if they fail to produce the intended effect; and that it would be impious for him to expect further assistance, while he continued in the neglect of that, which is given. He accordingly believes, that his salvation depends upon the fidelity of his own exertions, and not upon any thing, that is to take place independent of them, to which no prayers nor efforts of his can contribute, and which no neglect nor resistance of his can prevent or counteract.

By comparing the state of mind, which has now been presented, with that, which we have before seen must be produced by the orthodox doctrine, you will be able to decide, which is likely to excite to the most earnest and faithful exertion, and thus to have the most favorable moral tendency, and to produce the greatest practical effects.

I request you, also, not to be satisfied with a mere cursory reading of what follows in the same paragraph, from which my last quotation was taken, p. 141. I am confident, that a close attention to the representation there given, will lead you to think it less sound and correct than it seemed to you at first. If, as in the passage referred to, men are told, that their "being distinguished by the most correct habits, by the most useful actions, and by the highest improvement of their rational powers and natural sensibilities," is consistent with their being "in an unrenewed state,—finding in themselves that corruption of heart, which is the fountain of all iniquity; and the utter want of that

holiness, without which no man can see the Lord;" can it fail, if it have any practical effects, to weaken their sense of the value of good moral conduct, and to lower their estimate of the importance of a virtuous life? There may be, no doubt, much of the external show of virtue, where there is nothing of the reality,—no good principle within, from which it proceeds; and many good actions may be performed from bad or defective motives, and without any sense of religious or moral duty. But the quotation above expresses something quite different from this. There is a studied strength of language, and a universality of expression, which seems to comprehend all that belongs to good conduct, and good feeling. It is not, for instance, a few good actions, nor a single good habit; but habits of right conduct generally, forming a character. But can we suppose, that a man, distinguished for the most correct habits, is yet utterly destitute of holiness; that is, that he exhibits all the practical evidences of holiness, while he is influenced by no sense of duty, and has no principle of religious obedience? Is it credible that one should *habitually perform the most useful actions*, and yet in all his actions be influenced by an *earthly, selfish, unholy disposition?* And that, with his *rational powers and natural sensibilities in the highest state of improvement*, he has *that corruption of heart, which is the fountain of all iniquity?* Or admit that all this might be the case in a single instance, is it credible that it should be a common thing? What can be the tendency of such representations, but to dissolve in

men's minds the connexion between holiness of heart and a good life; and to lead them to regard that holiness, which constitutes a christian, as something distinct from a principle of religious obedience governing the conduct of life? Let it once be believed, that the best habits of life, and the most useful actions flowing from natural sensibility improved in the best manner, and under the direction of the most improved reason, are no marks of holiness; and we may soon expect it to be believed also, that the entire absence of these good habits, good actions, and good affections is to be regarded as no evidence of the want of holiness. Nor can it be doubted, that the effect is often answerable to what might be expected; that by representations so loosely made and carelessly expressed in general terms, an opinion has been produced, that there is at least but a very uncertain connexion between grace and good works; between holiness and a holy life. Such cannot, however, have been the design of Dr. Woods. Neither he nor any respectable orthodox divine can be supposed intentionally to inculcate such an opinion. But they are not sufficiently careful to guard against it.

In a remarkable passage (pp. 142—146) Dr. Woods has ventured to describe the manner, in which unitarian ministers ought, according to their principles, to address sinners; and he concludes by saying, "If I mistake not, the general conduct of those ministers, who hold the opinions of the book, to which I have undertaken a reply, corresponds substantially with the representation I

have made. Such, I am persuaded, would be my conduct, should I adopt those opinions."

As the passage, which closes with what you have now read, is too long to be quoted entire, I request you to read it with attention, and to satisfy yourselves, whether the hard censure it contains of unitarian ministers generally, be justified. If it be so, it will appear in the general strain of their preaching. It will be seen making a prominent feature in their printed discourses. It will be avowed by them in their writings, as the practical tendency of their doctrine. If you find no such thing, but a very different spirit pervading their writings and a different course pursued; you will conclude, not that Dr. Woods has designedly misrepresented those ministers, of whose spirit, character, and conduct, he professes to be *exact* in giving an account, and anxious *not to discolor or exaggerate;* but that he took the shorter course (a very common one indeed, but of questionable propriety at least, in so grave a charge,) of judging what the conduct of unitarian ministers actually is, by what his own would be in their situation; *for such,* he says, *I am persuaded would be my conduct, should I adopt their opinions.* You have now then only to take a fair view of those opinions, (not as they may be gathered out of fragments of sentences, picked here and there out of a controversial writing—separated from their connexion, so as sometimes grossly to pervert, instead of expressing, what was the obvious meaning of the writer;) but you are to consider the system as a whole, in all its connexions, and tendencies, as its

doctrines are expressed, when professedly stated by its sober defenders. You will then be able to judge, whether or not the adoption of those opinions ought to lead one to such a course.

Dr. Woods, however, seems anxious to have it believed that he is perfectly sincere in averring, that such would be the influence of the unitarian doctrine on *his* conduct; for he soon repeats it, and in each case accompanies the assertion with an emphasis, intended to attract attention. *Upon me*, he repeats, *I am persuaded, the influence of the prevailing system of unitarians, would produce all the effects above described.* But I will do Dr. Woods a justice, which he is not willing to do himself. I am not only fully persuaded, but morally certain, that with the good sense, and moral feeling, and true piety which I cannot doubt Dr. Woods possesses, the belief of the unitarian system would produce far other effects, than those, which he has described. Did the few scraps, which he has quoted, contain *the whole of his faith*, such might be his conduct; and as many scraps, I doubt not, might be selected out of the creed of a sound Calvinist, which would leave him at liberty to pursue a similar course. But is Dr. Woods so little acquainted with the unitarian faith, as to believe, that those extracts contain the whole of it, or all that is practical in it? If he is, instead of indulging such a strain of levity and sarcasm upon a subject which he has not examined,—or of which he has overlooked essential parts,—and presuming that pious and faithful ministers actually do, what

he thinks he should do in the state of mind, in which he supposes them to be; let him endeavour to ascertain what that state of mind actually is,—by taking into view, the great and leading doctrines, which they profess. Let him think, whether he should treat the hopes and fears, and everlasting interests of sinful, suffering, dying men, quite so lightly; if he believed,—as he *might* know that unitarians do believe,—that they are destined to an immortal being after death, a state of righteous retribution, in which every one shall receive, in happiness or misery, according as his works shall have been; that the present life is a state of discipline and probation, and that the effects of a right or wrong course of conduct in it, will be followed with consequences in a future life, both in degree and duration, important beyond our conception; that during this state of trial we have the earnest and affectionate calls of our heavenly Father to that virtue and holiness, which will secure his favour; that these calls are perfectly sincere, addressed to all, with which all have the power of complying, but which any one may resist; none being precluded from the possibility of accepting the offer by a previous decree, nor by an irresistible necessity of nature; and no one having his salvation insured by an absolute election, and an influence, in procuring which he has no agency; that the salvation or condemnation of every one, therefore, is depending, in the most proper sense, upon himself; depending upon the choice he shall make, and a choice which he has the power of making. That although all men were

created innocent,—all have become sinners,—all need repentance, all need forgiveness, all have reason for solicitude and watchfulness—all have temptations within and without, against which they must guard and strive. That we owe entire subjection to the will of God, and the entire devotion of all our faculties, and affections to his service; that it is then through the mercy of God only, revealed to us in the gospel, that we can hope, that any thing short of perfect unsinning obedience will be accepted to our salvation; that the salvation, therefore, of the best and holiest, is to be acknowledged as wholly an act of grace, and that this grace will be extended only to those, who are truly penitent, and faithful in their endeavours to possess true holiness.

If, with such views of the human condition, and of human duty and prospects, Dr. Woods could find in his heart to treat the subject in the manner that he represents, I can only say, his heart is very different from what I am willing to believe it; and should he still assert it, my charity would still compel me to judge better of him, than he does of himself, and to say that his assertion was not made with due deliberation.

But justice to my cause requires me, and I am sorry it does, to say something more respecting the representation which Dr. Woods has given of the course pursued by unitarian ministers. It consists, you perceive, in the application of several words, and parts of sentences, in my Letters, as Dr. Woods supposes I would apply them, in the several cases imagined.

Of the propriety and discreetness of such a mode of proceeding, you will be better able to judge, and so perhaps will Dr. Woods himself, by a similar method of proceeding on the other side. Following the example then, and adopting the manner, of my author, I ask, "What is the scheme of practical religion, with which the belief of innate depravity is associated? If I believe as a general truth, that all men are totally depraved, that is, if I believe them to be by nature, enemies of God, inclined only to evil, whose dispositions and affections are wholly wrong, I must treat them accordingly. I must hate them, and treat them as enemies; for it is my duty to hate, what God hates, and to be the enemy of his enemies. If I see in any of them, what seems to me to be amiable traits of character, such as kindness, justice, love of truth, I must beware how I allow myself to be seduced into any good opinion of them, or kind feelings toward them; for all this, and even the best habits of life, and most useful actions, flowing from the kindest sensibilities and under the direction of cultivated reason, may flow from a heart that is evil only. If I address sinners either in public or private, I may apply to each individual what is said of the worst enemies of God, of man, and of religion,—of Pharaoh, of Jeroboam, and of Judas, that he is a thief, a murderer, and a betrayer of innocent blood. I may represent his condition, too, as most awful and wretched and hopeless, while he remains so. But I must not so far forget myself, as to exhort him to repentance, for this would imply that he could

repent. I must not encourage him to inquire, what he shall do to be saved, for he can do nothing. I must not suffer him to hope for any benefit, though he seek, and strive, and pray for a new heart and a new spirit; because God will grant this only to those, who are elected to eternal life, and that election, which ensures the salvation of those, who are the subjects of it, is wholly without reference to any thing, that they can do to deserve or to procure it; so that those, who are elected, will have this renewing and saving influence, whether they pray or not; and to those, who are not elected, it will be denied, however earnestly they may seek, and pray, and strive. I shall say then to the wicked, there is no reason why you should afflict yourselves, or deny yourselves any of the pleasures of sin; for you are as likely to become the subjects of regenerating grace in the haunts of profligacy and vice, in the act of theft or perjury, or murder; as in a church, in the midst of domestic duties, or in the act of prayer, or in performing the most useful and virtuous deed.

If any one, anxious and distressed under a sense of guilt, were disposed to break off from the habits of sin, and to practise temperance, truth, and righteousnes, and to perform the duties, which he has neglected, with the hope that such efforts will be pleasing to God; I should say, beware how you presume thus to take God's work out of his own hands. He only by his irresistible grace can renew your heart, and till he has done it, all your desires, and efforts, and thoughts, and actions are

but adding to your sin; and such efforts will increase in a peculiar manner, your danger, because they have a tendency to make you rely on your own works. You had better, therefore, abstain from them. It is safer for you not to perform any good works, than to place any dependence on them, or to think them of any value. To both, saints and sinners, I ought to say, in order to relieve them from needless labour and useless solicitude; your cares and exertions to regulate your temper and lives are ill placed and wholly useless. For if you are not elected to eternal life, nothing that you can do will have any tendency to promote your salvation, so that it is clearly your interest to sin with as little fear, as little restraint, and as little remorse as possible; since it can add nothing to your future doom. You are by nature *totally* wicked, and you cannot make yourself more so.

If, on the other hand, you are elected to eternal life, your final salvation is sure to you without your exertions; for the eternal purposes of God cannot be frustrated. And besides, the whole work of salvation is wrought for those, who are to be saved. Whatever they may do, it can be of no use to them, as respects the forgiveness of sin and their final salvation. *For we must rely on the atoning blood of the Son of God as the sole ground of the forgiveness of sin;* and for no purpose,—certainly not in any connexion with our salvation,—must *any works of righteousness, or any accomplishments or dispositions we possess, be ever named in his presence*

Had I, in my answer to Letters addressed to Unitarians, indulged myself in such a representation, many Unitarians and some Calvinists would have assented to it, as a just account. But from the author of those Letters it would probably have drawn forth epithets like those, which he bestows upon a passage from Wesley in another case (p. 174)—he would have so far forgotten his usual tone of moderation and urbanity, as to call it, *a strain of violent misrepresentation, scurrility, and outrage.*

For although all the consequences inferred above have been admitted by those, who maintained the fundamental doctrines of Calvinism, and their preaching has actually been of that tenor and tendency; and although I am unable to perceive, that any violence is offered in drawing these consequences; yet, not believing that Dr. Woods, or the orthodox generally, do actually use such a mode of address, I should have been justly liable to severe rebuke, had I asserted, *that the conduct of orthodox ministers generally corresponds with the representations which I have given.* Dr. Woods, however, is not liable to the same rebuke, because he believes, that such as he stated is the conduct of ministers, who hold the opinions contained in the Letters addressed to Trinitarians and Calvinists. I only ask him to recollect again what are the grounds of that belief.

LETTER IX.

ELECTION. Statement of the doctrine by Dr. Channing defended. Charge against Wesley considered. Dr. Woods' reasoning examined. Distinctions between Foreknowledge and Predetermination—between physical and moral events—between certainty and necessity. Cases of Paul and Mary Magdalene. Appointment to means and privileges—not to holiness and salvation. Inconclusive reasoning, and inconsistency. Another instance. Doctrine of Election and Philosophical necessity entirely distinct.

I AM quite unable to perceive, why, in the beginning of the IXth Chapter, Dr. Woods should refer, with the sensibility he expresses, to what Dr. Channing had said in relation to the doctrine of election in the sermon, which was the occasion of these discussions. That the glowing eloquence, and force of language, with which he expresses his feelings in regard to the doctrine, should give pain to one, who believes it to be the truth of the gospel, I can easily conceive; but that is a very different thing from being chargeable with giving a false account of the doctrine itself. It is nothing more than expressing, in strong terms, his opinion as to the character of the doctrine.

Turning to the passage in the sermon, which I presume was referred to, I see not with what propriety it can be said, that the orthodox *do not maintain the opinions* there stated, and that *the charges there contained are untrue.* The offensive statement of the doctrine, is the following.* "This system also teaches, that God selects from the corrupt mass of men a number to be saved, and

* Dr. Channing's Sermon, 2d. edit. p. 30.

that they are plucked by an irresistible agency from the common ruin, whilst the rest are commanded under penalty of aggravated woe to make a change in their characters, which their natural corruption places beyond their power, and are also promised pardon on conditions, which necessarily avail them nothing unless they are favoured with a special operation of God's grace, which he is predetermined to withhold."

I ask you to what part of this statement Dr. Woods can object as untrue? Not to that which says, "that God selects from the corrupt mass of men a number to be saved,"—for this is the very essence of the doctrine,—*that a number, a certain definite number, is chosen from among mankind; so certain and definite, that it can neither be increased nor diminished.* Not that those thus selected are "plucked by an irresistible agency from the common ruin." For the necessity of regeneration, and that it is *effected solely by a mighty energy of God*, which the sinner can do nothing to procure, and the efficacy of which he cannot prevent; is a part of the system, which no one, pretending to orthodoxy, will call in question. Is it then, "that the rest are commanded under penalty of aggravated woe, to make a change in their characters, which their natural corruption places beyond their power?" But you will surely not deny, that all the commands of the gospel to repentance, holiness, newness of life, are addressed to the wicked, i. e. to those, who need to repent, to be renewed, and to become holy; nor will you deny, that upon the

principles of orthodoxy, such is their natural corruption, that it is not in the power of any one to obey the command, without an influence exerted upon him, which he can do nothing to procure. The false charge then must consist in saying, *that they are promised pardon on conditions, which necessarily avail them nothing, unless they are favored with a special operation of God's grace, which he is predetermined to withhold.* You must then say, either that the conditions of pardon can be complied with without a special operation of divine grace, or that the sinner can do something to procure this special operation; or that the election to salvation is not so certain, but that one, who is not elected, may yet possibly have that renovating influence exerted upon him, by which he may be enabled to comply with the conditions of pardon.

There is a passage also quoted, with a similar complaint, from the writings of John Wesley. But it seems to me with as little reason. Dr. Woods, however, thinks, that human ingenuity could not make a representation of the doctrine, *more uncandid, distorted, or false.* These are strong expressions, and arrest our attention to the grounds of the charge. *The sum of all,* says Wesley, *is this;—one in twenty (suppose) of mankind, are elected; nineteen in twenty are reprobated. The elect shall be saved, do what they will; the reprobate shall be damned do what they can.* There is in the form of expression here an air of flippancy, which one does not wish to see used on serious subjects; but I do not perceive, to what part of the statement

a Calvinist can object, as giving a false view of the doctrine. *The elect shall be saved, do what they will.* Will you say, that any one of the elect ever will do, what will cut him off from salvation? Is not the decree of election certain? Can the purpose of God in it be frustrated by the will of the creature? Suppose he be guilty of all manner of crimes, and even after he has been regenerated by the grace of God, relapse into the most wicked course of life; is it not yet absolutely certain, that he will be finally saved? On the other hand, the reprobate shall be damned, *do what they can.* Will you say that any one of the nonelect, upon the principles of orthodoxy, *can* do any thing, by which he can obtain salvation? If he can, then he can frustrate the purpose of God in election. Then he can oblige God to do, what he had determined not to do. To say that one, not elected to salvation, can do any thing by which he may obtain eternal life, is to say, that the purpose of God is not immutable, and to reduce it to that state of contingency, which orthodoxy abhors. I presume it cannot be merely the proportion, *one in twenty*, which gives offence. If the *principle* in the statement be correct, whether the proportion be one in twenty, one in twenty thousand, or twenty thousand to one, will be of little consequence. This, however, we have some reason to think, was actually Dr. Woods' ground of objection to the statement, from what occurs, p. 156. It is "a manifest error," he says, "to state the doctrine thus," viz. that the doctrine of election implies, that only a small part of

mankind are chosen to salvation; "and any one who justifies the representations often made of our doctrine in this respect, justifies what may justly be called *religious calumny.*"

But I am reminded here to ask, if the orthodox really hold the opinions they profess to do, in the common meaning of the terms, in which they are expressed in their creeds and writings, why do they manifest such strong sensibility and complain so loudly of being misrepresented, whenever other language is used in reference to them, which expresses no more, than what is necessarily implied, or clearly follows from the terms they actually make use of. Can we want better evidence than this,—that the language, in which they are expressed, is used in some technical sense, and not in its common acceptation? Is it not rendered probable, that in the use of the terms, *native depravity*, *election*, *atonement*, and *divine influence*, some technical meaning is concealed, as different from their common meaning, as used in other cases,—as the term *person* is, as applied to the doctrine of the Trinity?

In *that* case, as we are now informed, the term *person* does not mean, what it does in all other cases,—does not mean any thing intelligible, any thing that can be defined, or be so expressed, as to convey any distinct idea, by other words. If the same is true, as the circumstance I have mentioned renders probable, as to the other orthodox terms, there may be less real difference of opinion than is imagined; it may consist more in words

and technical phraseology, which has no definite meaning, than in real opinion. I am led the more readily to think this to be the case from another fact; viz. that Episcopalians generally understand the strong Calvinistic language of their articles in a very different sense from that, which it conveys in its obvious meaning. So that with articles apparently expressing the same faith with the Westminster confession; that which they profess, in intelligible language, is widely different.

I proceed now to the elaborate and ingenious defence of the doctrine, which follows; and will endeavour to point out to you, wherein the defect of the reasoning, and the fallacy in the conclusions, consist. I observe, in the first place, that the whole reasoning proceeds upon the assumption of the doctrine, which is to be proved; and it leads to false conclusions by constantly confounding together terms, which have different meanings. I may admit, as is stated (p. 151,) *That God had an eternal purpose respecting human salvation,—that the purpose of God corresponds with what actually takes place,—that is, God's purposes respecting man's salvation correspond with his administration.* But I enter my objection, when it is added (p. 152) in order to lay a broader basis for some following conclusions,—*that there can be no unforeseen occurrence,—no event not predetermined.* Here terms of very different import are confounded together as if they were synonymous. I admit that *no unforeseen occurrence can take place;* but does it hence follow, that *no event not predetermined* can take

place? That may be *foreseen*, respecting which there is no *predetermination*. God may foresee how I will act, without having determined that I shall so act.

This assumes again one of the important points at issue, i. e. that the foreknowledge of an event *implies*, that it is decreed. It also goes on the assumption, that the foreknowledge of God is inconsistent with free agency. For, in whatever it is predetermined, that the agent shall do, he can have no liberty of choice. He can only choose, what it is decreed he shall choose. But it has not been shown, and I think it cannot be shown, that an omniscient Being may not know infallibly, what choice a being will make in a case, where it has the perfect liberty of choosing either of the alternatives presented. The fact is, that the simple foreknowledge of God has no influence in producing the event foreknown. It has no relation to the causes, whether physical or moral, by which it is to be produced; but only to the certainty of the event.

But our author proceeds to the assertion (p. 152) "that the purpose of God extends to all events of his administration." This might be admitted with certain explanations; but to the explanation, which soon follows, (p. 153)—"that God determines *all* his own acts, and ALL *that shall result from them*," we object, that this is again assuming the whole question at issue, which is, whether or not God does so predetermine all things, that are to take place. It may be admitted without hesitation as to the first part of the sentence, *as relates to his own*

acts, properly so called; but as to *all*, that shall result from them,—the very question between us is, whether they are or are not predetermined.

So far as respects the material world, and the physical laws by which it is governed, the result of every act of the Deity, following by a physical necessity from the act itself, may be considered as involved in it, and the particular result may be considered as predetermined in the act, of which it is the result. But, with respect to the whole moral system, the case, we think, is essentially different. The purpose of God here, we contend, is different. It is not a purpose, that beings endowed with certain moral powers shall perform certain specific acts; but that they shall be exposed to certain influences, to the operation of certain motives, and that certain consequences shall follow the choice, they shall freely make, and the course, they shall freely pursue. It is not, that Peter or Judas shall actually make *this* choice, pursue *this* course, and be *thus* rewarded or punished; but thus, Peter shall have the power of choosing and pursuing this or the opposite course; and according as he shall pursue the one or the other, he shall be rewarded or punished. How he will in fact conduct himself in the alternative may be perfectly known to him, who has access to the human heart; but the particular result foreknown, was not a subject of predetermination; that is, it was predetermined that the being in question should act freely and be dealt with accordingly;

not that it should perform the specific act, which it did perform.

This distinction, it seems to me, is recognized more clearly and certainly, than almost any other, throughout the bible. What else is meant in all the commands, intreaties, exhortations, expostulations, alternatives proposed to us? What else, when we are so often and constantly told,—this do and live, that and die,—that *if* we are obedient, such will be the consequence,—if disobedient, the contrary? What else is implied, when the sinner is reproached with the choice he has made,—but that it was in his power to have chosen otherwise than he did; when he is charged with having brought upon himself the ruin, which has come upon him; but that he might have avoided it by a different course? Especially, what else could be intended, when we are told, that if the inhabitants of ancient Sodom had enjoyed the advantages, which were rejected by the Jews in the time of our Saviour, they would have repented; and in those contingent predictions, when the event foretold is suspended on the contingence of another event; and that not happening, the predicted event did not take place? As in the case of David and the men of Keilah, Jonah and the inhabitants of Nineveh.

The author proceeds (p. 154) from the consideration of what is applicable to the general doctrine of predestination, to what relates particularly to that of personal election. The reasoning is, "God does in fact save a certain definite number of individuals, who will appear at the right hand of God at the

judgment day. As his purpose must agree with what he actually does, he must have designed to save that same definite number of individuals." Here again, as before, we must distinguish between the proper act of God, and that of his creatures. To save men, or to confer upon them the rewards of a future life, is the act of God; and the definite number of individuals, whom he does thus save, he undoubtedly designed to save. But that conduct of moral beings, by which they become the proper subjects of this salvation, is not his act, and not predetermined by him. It is the object of his foreknowledge, and upon that foreknowledge is grounded his determination respecting their salvation. But this foreknowledge has no influence in producing the course of conduct thus foreknown; and their salvation is to be attributed not to an arbitrary purpose and appointment of the Deity, but to their own free acts.

It is correctly said, (p. 155) "If we take care first to learn from scripture and observation what God actually does, and in what manner he does it, we can have no difficulty in passing from this to a correct and satisfactory view of his purposes." Yet are we in great danger of passing to a wrong conclusion, from not distinguishing correctly, what are the *proper acts of God*, and what are the *acts of his creatures.* And in proceeding, I shall show, how this is actually done by the orthodox, by attributing to God those actions of men, upon which their salvation depends. For our author proceeds to say, (p. 157) "that salvation may denote the

regeneration, or first conversion of sinners;" and this is wholly the act of God. Man has no choice, and no agency in it. "Whenever God makes men holy, he must do it without regard to any goodness in them," (p. 158.) The first formation of a holy character, "or the commencement of real goodness in the heart, is *wholly unconditional.*" "It seems perfectly clear, that God did not determine to regenerate men or make them holy from any foresight of repentance, faith, or good works, as conditions or causes moving him thereunto." And finally this unconditional grant of regenerating grace, "is distinguishing, i. e. it is so dispensed, that of those equally unworthy of favor, and equally deserving of punishment, some are renewed, and others not."

After this account of the purpose of God in election, and the manner in which that purpose is executed, we are not a little struck with the defence of its justice, which follows. It is justified upon the ground, that *no wrong is done to those, who are passed by, though others equally guilty and undeserving are taken from among them, and by special grace are made holy and saved, while they are left to remain in sin, and perish.* There might be some weight in this defence upon some other hypothesis, as to the ground of their guilt and ill desert. But none upon the orthodox hypothesis. It might be urged with a semblance of justice, were the sinfulness in question their own act, and not the act of God; their condition, one into which they had brought themselves,

and not one in which they were placed by their Maker; and were the common grace granted to all sufficient to render it possible for them to become holy and thus be saved. But the reverse of all this, the orthodox faith teaches. They are, as they came from the hand of the Creator, totally depraved, inclined only to evil, and incapable of any good, till renewed by the irresistible influence of the spirit of God; and that influence is withheld from them. Besides this, their everlasting doom was appointed irreversibly before they were brought into being. "For (p. 152) the purpose of God extends to all events in his administration." It extends then to the continued sinfulness and final loss of those, who perish, in the same sense, as it does to the renewal to holiness and final salvation of those who are saved. If God makes men holy, in such a manner, that the act is wholly his, it must be wholly his act, that they are left in a state of unholiness; and if it is perfectly clear, that "God did not determine to regenerate men, or make them holy from any foresight of repentance and good works, it must be equally certain, that he did not appoint the unregenerate to perish in their sins, from any foresight of their impenitence and sins." You will judge then, with what propriety our author could deny the charge urged against the orthodox system, (p. 162) "as representing, that God appoints men to everlasting misery without any regard to their conduct;" by saying, "it is a thing as far from our belief as Atheism." The inconsistency of saying in one sentence, that they

are ordained to wrath *for their sins*, and because they have been workers of iniquity; and in another, that the elect are chosen without any foresight of faith or good works, as conditions or causes moving to the choice; and that no others but the elect are redeemed, sanctified and saved, is not the less real, nor the less obvious for having been stated by the Westminster divines.

But the justice of making an arbitrary distinction, where the desert is equal, is defended on another ground. It is said (p. 159,) "If it be unjust, it cannot be admitted that God would do it in a single instance. But it has been made in some extraordinary instances, as in that of Paul and Mary Magdalene." But it is denied that these are cases in point. We have not a particle of evidence, that either of them was converted from sin to holiness by an irresistible, and an irrespective influence. The former was converted by a miracle to the christian faith, but not by a miracle to the christian character. He might or might not still have remained a wicked man. His not remaining so was to be attributed to the moral influences of christianity upon his life, not to an irresistible influence of God upon his heart. Notwithstanding all that was miraculous in his conversion, but for this moral influence of the gospel upon his heart, he might have been found at last among those, who, in the great day, could make the appeal, "Lord, have we not prophecied in thy name, and cast out demons, and done wonderful works?"—but to whom it will yet be said, "I know

you not; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity." In the latter case, still less reason is there to imagine any distinguishing grace in a conversion from sin to holiness. Mary Magdalene had been the subject of a distinguished miracle, and became afterward a pious and faithful follower of Jesus, and persevered in her fidelity to the end. But we have no intimation, that the miracle was the direct and immediate cause of her subsequent piety, much less, that it was accompanied with an irresistible influence upon her mind. The probability is, that it was the occasion of her future good life, by bringing her to the knowledge of the Saviour and an attendance upon his instruction, which yet she might have attended, as many others did, without receiving from it the impression, influences, and direction of the conduct of life, which she did.

In my Letters I had said (p. 64,) "that in the appointment of men to privileges, means, and external condition, God has exercised an absolute sovereignty." This, Dr. Woods thinks, is attended with as formidable difficulties, as the orthodox doctrine, because the whole value of these consists in their influence on character. The design of superior advantages is to give opportunity for higher attainments, than could be reached with those that were inferior. If privileges are granted to some, in distinction from others, which are designed to produce, and do in fact to a certain extent produce, a sanctifying influence upon their character; where, it is asked, is the difference, as to the general dif-

ficulty, between this, and the direct and immediate appointment to holiness itself?

The answer, I think, is clear and decisive, that the difference is the greatest possible; the one being entirely consistent, the other utterly inconsistent, with moral accountability. The difficulty on our side would be indeed insurmountable, if privileges and means produced their effects by an irresistible influence, and attained their object by a necessary tendency; and that holiness, which is connected with salvation, could not be attained without them. But according to our system (and in this point it is certainly supported by all our experience and observation) holiness, and of course final salvation, is not exclusively the result of any particular privileges and means; but depends wholly on the use and improvement of means. It is not the number of talents, whether one, or ten, or ten thousand, but the degree of fidelity with which they have been employed. Higher privileges give opportunity for higher attainments; at the same time, they involve higher duties and increase responsibility. He who possesses them may rise higher, or he may sink lower, in consequence of the distinction, according as he shall improve or neglect his advantages. On the other hand, the lowest grade of moral advantage does not place its possessor below the notice of his Maker, nor beyond the reach of his mercy, and the possibility of attaining that holinesss, which is connected with salvation. The christian, in an enlightened country and age, has undoubtedly cause to be grateful for the advanta-

ges, religious and moral, by which he is distinguished from the ignorant and degraded savage in a pagan country. But the latter, we contend, upon our principles, has no reasonable ground of complaint; since his acceptance or rejection by his Maker and final Judge will be grounded, not upon his positive attainments, but upon the degree of fidelity, with which he shall have improved his opportunities. He will be judged by that rule of equity, according to which, "much is required of him, who has received much," and less of him, who has received little. Connected with this principle, upon which the final judgment is to proceed, the moral difficulty, we think, arising from the variety there is in the allotment of privileges, means, and external condition, however arbitrary it may be, if not wholly removed, bears no resemblance and no proportion to that, which arises from the orthodox doctrine, that of an absolute and unconditional appointment, not to means, by which holiness and happiness may or may not be attained; but to holiness itself and consequent salvation, on the one hand, and, on the other, to having it withheld, and the impossibility of attaining that salvation, for which it is the qualification, and of which it is the condition.

Dr. Woods seems wholly to overlook the real efficacy of privileges and means, and not to distinguish them from the ends, to produce which they have a tendency. His argument proceeds upon the assumption, which is contradicted by all experience, that the actual attainments of men are

exactly, as their privileges and means; that men are holy in proportion to their advantages for becoming holy; that every person living in a christian land, and enjoying the light and institutions of the gospel, has of course the christian character; and that he, who has not those external advantages, cannot possibly have true holiness, and is cut off from the possibility of securing the favor of heaven. He indeed surprises us with the assertion, (p. 166) "that the previous determination to give men the christian revelation is, in effect, a determination to make them holy." Also, "that the truths and precepts, and promises of scripture are the *only medicines* which can cure the moral diseases of men;" so that, "to withhold the scriptures is to leave men to the fatal influence of those moral diseases, thus rendered *incurable*." In these sentences, our author has distinctly expressed, what the whole of his argument required, that all who have the light of the gospel are made holy by it, and saved; and that all, from whom its light is withheld, must remain in sin, and are left to perish. Nor can we perceive, that one, who receives the orthodox doctrine of election, need to feel any reluctance at this, as a part of it. There is no more difficulty in fixing upon that division of the human race, which is made by the circumstance of enjoying, or not enjoying, the light of the gospel, than upon any other.

But this opinion, though expressed so distinctly in the sentences quoted, seems to be held with some degree of doubt and reservation. For in the pre-

ceding sentence, in each case, that is expressed with limitation, to which afterwards a universal expression is applied. It is first said, that revelation contributes, *in many cases effectually*, to the formation of a holy character; implying, contrary to what the next sentence asserts, that it may not be effectual in all cases. So also, to "withhold the sacred oracles and other means of religion, is to leave men without *any reasonable prospect* of being brought to repentance; not cutting off, as the next sentence does, its possibility, and harshly pronouncing the moral diseases, under the influence of which they are left by this dereliction, absolutely *fatal* and *incurable*. The occurrence of two such striking instances of inconsistency in the compass of four short sentences, in a writer usually so guarded and careful, is a remarkable example of the vacillation of mind produced by the conflicting struggles, of sound sense, and correct moral feelings, with an article of faith, with which they are at variance.

In the following page (p. 167,) an instance occurs, not very dissimilar, of an attempt to fasten upon the author of the Letters to Trinitarians and Calvinists an inconsistency, in admitting the absolute sovereignty of God in the grant of privileges and means, and denying, that the same sovereignty is exercised, in appointing men to holiness, and in fixing their final condition; since it is said, *these are inseparably connected*. "Means are given for the very purpose of producing an effect on character, and character thus formed, determines the condition of men in the future world." The con-

nected series stands thus,—"means of moral culture, formation of character, condition in the future world. Condition in the future world depends on character; character on the enjoyment of means; and the enjoyment of means, confessedly on the absolute sovereignty of God." It must be confessed this sentence stands, at first sight, very logically, and has a very imposing aspect. But the reader, who recollects so much of his logic, as that a particular, and even a general proposition is not quite broad enough to support a universal conclusion, will demur at the reasoning, and require, in order to admit the conclusion, what I am apprehensive it will not be found very easy to produce, the proof, that character is *always* in fact exactly answerable to means; that men are actually holy in proportion as they have the means of being holy; and that there is no difference in the fidelity with which they make use of the means they enjoy. When Dr. Woods shall recur to a point, which he seems so singularly to have overlooked, he will be able himself to answer the question, which he asks with so much apparent surprise, why I object to the notion of the "appointment of God relating either to men's character or to their future condition, while I admit that it relates to privileges and means."

The objection which lies against a large proportion of the reasoning in the chapter under consideration is, that it confounds the doctrine of particular election, with that of philosophical necessity, as if they must stand or fall together; whereas no

two opinions are more entirely distinct and independent of each other. Philosophical necessity is common to the Calvinism of Edwards, the Unitarianism of Priestley, the Scepticism of Hume, and the Atheism (if it may be properly so denominated) of Hobbes and of Godwin. I have chosen to state my objection to the orthodox doctrine of election, and to defend that objection, upon the ground of moral freedom, as distinguished from philosophical necessity, because I believe it to be the truth, notwithstanding the metaphysical objection that lies against it; which I think is of less force, than the moral objection to the opposite scheme; but whether I have succeeded or not in that point, the question of particular personal election is not affected. The doctrine of philosophical necessity may be true, and yet that of personal election, as maintained by the orthodox, be without foundation.

I am not insensible, as I have before intimated, that the doctrine of moral freedom, as opposed to philosophical necessity, is attended with a metaphysical difficulty, a difficulty, which I do not expect to remove to the entire satisfaction of those, whose minds are turned more to metaphysical, than to moral speculations; and as my controversy with Dr. Woods relates to the Calvinistic doctrine of election, and has no necessary connexion with that of philosophical necessity, my design in this pamphlet does not require me to say any thing more, than what you find in Letter VII, and the preceding part of this, on the subject. To the brief statements which I have there given of the grounds

upon which my opinion on the subject rests, I refer you as furnishing the answer I would give to a large proportion of the reasoning in this chapter. Wishing not to swell this pamphlet unnecessarily by repeating the arguments which were there used, I will satisfy myself with this general reference, and a few further remarks upon some particular passages.

I trust there are few, if any of my readers, who can have so wholly misunderstood the force and design of the passages of my Letters, which are noticed by Dr. Woods (pp. 171—173) as the remarks of Dr. Woods imply that he has done. I wish you to read the pages referred to by him, and see if you find any thing to justify the following singular remark. "The position of our opponents, if well examined, will evidently amount to this,—that *God's determining* that men shall act from motives, *hinders* them from acting in this manner; that his determining that men shall be moral, accountable agents, makes it impossible they should be so. Whereas we have been very much inclined to think, that God's determination, if it has any influence, must tend to *accomplish* the thing determined, not to prevent it." I believe no intelligent reader will doubt, that we are as much *inclined*, as Dr. Woods, to think, that God's determination must not only *tend to accomplish*, but *must certainly accomplish* the thing determined. And I presume that no reader, except Dr. Woods, has failed to perceive, that the whole of our reasoning is founded upon the supposition of the certain con-

nexion between the determination of God and the event; that his purpose cannot be frustrated, his decree cannot fail. The question between us relates to the fact, whether certain things are subjects of the divine decree, not whether, being decreed, they will or will not take place.

Now my reasons for saying, that the orthodox doctrine of election is inconsistent with *all those passages of scripture, which imply the influence of motives*, reasons which I thought were sufficiently clear and intelligible before, may be stated more largely thus :—

When it is said, that to address motives of conduct to a person implies, that he is capable of being influenced by motives, the meaning is, not only that he is so constituted, as to act under the influence of motives; but that when different motives of conduct are presented before him, he has the power of choosing, by which of them his conduct shall be governed. He can choose, for example, between following the impulse of passion, on the one hand, and the suggestions of reason, or the motives presented by the word of God, on the other. Now according to the orthodox doctrine, men act indeed under the influence of motives, but not freely; since what particular motive shall govern each action of life is a matter of absolute and irreversible appointment. In no case then can any motive addressed to the sinner, influence his conduct, but that, which it was determined from eternity, should influence it. I ask then, whether God's determining that the sinner shall act from a

particular motive does not *hinder* him from acting from all other motives,—does not render it impossible for him to be influenced by any other motives, and does not make it inconsistent with sincerity in the author of his being, to urge other motives upon him, to press him with inducements to holiness, which he has determined shall not prevail; to complain that they do not prevail, and to solicit him by *promises*, *threatenings*, *warnings*, *admonitions*, *exhortations*, and *entreaties*, to do that, which he had determined from the first he never should do; to do that, which he had no ability to do without *a mighty influence* from himself, which he was always determined not to grant him?

Nor am I able to perceive, how the instances of Pharaoh and the murderers of our Lord (p. 172) furnish any real support to the argument. If the actions of those men, as is repeatedly asserted in this and the following page, were *free and voluntary;* if they acted as *free moral agents;* if they were *capable of being influenced by motives* in such a manner, *that promises*, *threats*, *warnings*, *&c. were proper and useful*, as Dr. Woods asserts, then their actions were *predetermined* in no other sense, than any unitarian will readily admit. That God has purposes to accomplish, that he employs human agents in accomplishing them, that he employs the sinful actions of wicked men in effecting the most important ends in his moral government, makes a part of the unitarian faith. The treachery of Judas and the malice of the Jewish priests were employed in bringing about the crucifixion of our Lord, and

thus accomplishing what *the counsel of the Lord before determined to be done.* Now in this, and, in all similar cases, we say, God did not predestine these men to that wickedness of heart and character, which led to this act; but he determined to employ that wickedness, in which they were free and voluntary agents, in accomplishing his purpose. And this, as far as I can see, and nothing more, must be the meaning of Dr. Woods; and if it be so, you will perceive it comes short of giving any support to the orthodox doctrine.

He speaks of them as *voluntary and free.*

A man imprisoned and in chains is not *free.* It is not in his power either to leave the prison or remain, as he chooses. He has no freedom of choice with respect to departing or staying in his present situation. Yet his act of remaining may be perfectly *voluntary;* that is, he may remain willingly. He may prefer to remain, though he had the power of leaving the place. A man may then act *voluntarily*, though he cannot act *freely*, under a physical necessity. The same distinction between *free* and *voluntary* action may exist, where there is no reference to physical restraint. The sinner acts *voluntarily*, but not *freely*, if the orthodox doctrines of depravity and election be true. But in the present case, there can be no reference to *physical* freedom or necessity. The subject relates only to *moral action.* The meaning then must be, if the meaning comports with what the words properly express, that they act with *moral freedom.* But the moral freedom of an action consists in its being performed by one,

who had the power of choosing the action or not. If he had the power only of choosing the action, but not of refusing it; he acted from *moral necessity.* If he chose what he had the power to choose or not to choose, he acted with *moral freedom.*

It is asserted again, that they were *free moral agents.* The very use of this phrase shows, that there was in Dr. Woods' mind the distinction which I have made. That there is a distinction between a *free moral agent* and a *necessary moral agent.** Else why does he add the term *free?* And it is observable that his assertion is, that the murderers of our Lord were *free moral agents.* There was then no such absolute predetermination of their actions and volitions, as to render them *morally necessary;* but they were performed with *moral freedom.*

But the whole of this receives strong confirmation by the decisive expressions which follow. It is asserted, that "they were *capable of being influenced by motives,* in such a manner, *that promises, threats, warnings, &c. were proper and useful.*

Now, when we say a man is capable of being influenced by motives, as I have before observed, we mean, that he is capable of judging and choosing between the motives upon both sides, which relate to a particular action, a course of life, or actions in general. We can with no propriety say,

* Dr. Woods will not misunderstand me as admitting by this, that there can be any such thing, as a *necessary moral agent.* Moral agency implies freedom, as it implies that the being of whom it is predicated is accountable for his actions, and he only can be accountable for his actions, who is free.

that *he* is capable of being influenced by motives, who is absolutely bound by necessity or a previous decree to be governed by the motives on one side, whatever motives may be presented on the other. He acts indeed under the influence of motives, and voluntarily; but he acts not freely, because he is not *capable of being influenced by any other motives*, which may be offered in opposition to them, however high and strong, however clearly stated, and however tenderly urged. But it is further said, he is capable of being influenced in such a manner, that *promises, threats, warnings, &c. were proper and useful.* But promises &c. are *proper* to be urged only upon those, who are capable of being influenced by the motive thus offered, and they can be *useful* only to such. It is certainly something more than absurd, it is mockery for that Being to urge upon sinners all the motives to holiness, that consist in promises, threats, exhortations and warnings, who, having an absolute and entire control over them, has previously determined that none of those motives shall prevail; and who has by the constitution of their nature and his eternal decree, made it impossible for any other motives to prevail, but those which lead to sin.

If any of the sinful actions of wicked men, by which they accomplish the purposes of heaven, are performed in pursuance of a decree, or under a necessity, which takes from them the liberty of which I speak; with respect to those actions, though they may be *voluntary* in performing them,

yet not being *free*, they cannot be morally accountable. They incur no just blame, and are not deserving of punishment.

I think it unnecessary to notice in detail all the reasoning that follows in the remainder of this chapter. The single remark, before made, which is sufficient to invalidate its whole force, is, that Dr. Woods proceeds all along upon the idea, that the orthodox doctrine of election is the same, as that of philosophical necessity ; and all his conclusions, as I have before shown, depend upon its being so. All depends upon its being a fact, that it is by the influence of the promises, exhortations, warnings, and other means of religion, that men are made holy ; whereas, if the doctrines of total depravity, and personal election be true, the means of religion can produce no such effects. Whatever means are employed, they can produce no effect. No expostulations, no warnings, no hopes or fears addressed to sinners can have the smallest tendency to renew and sanctify them. Nothing but that mighty influence, which is imparted to the elect, and to them only, can produce holiness. And in those, to whom it is imparted, it cannot fail to produce it. The hopes and fears, the exhortations and warnings of religion can have no influence upon the non-elect; and the elect, though no such means were used, will certainly be regenerated, made holy, and be saved by that mighty influence, which is independent alike of all human efforts, and all external means.

With respect to the argument to be drawn from several passages of scripture, I am willing to leave it without any further remark. By comparing the explanation of those passages, which was given in my former Letters, with what is here urged by Dr. Woods in reply, you will be able to judge, whether they furnish satisfactory proof, that the orthodox doctrine of election is a doctrine of scripture; or whether those few passages of scripture, which are relied on in the argument, admit of a fair interpretation, which will give a meaning, that has no relation to the doctrine; and which is perfectly consistent with the general language and obvious import of the scriptures, in what relates to the duty and destiny of man, as a moral and accountable being.

I have one word only to say more, as to the moral argument upon the question in discussion. The author of the Reply has very naturally confined himself chiefly to metaphysical reasoning. The fallacy of that reasoning, I think, I have shown with a sufficient degree of clearness. The moral considerations, which seem to me to be of irresistible force in opposition to the doctrine, are very obvious, and may be stated in few words; or rather they suggest themselves immediately upon the statement of the doctrine itself.

God is represented by this doctrine, as bringing into being all the descendants of Adam, on account of his sin, with a nature totally corrupt, inclined only to evil, with dispositions and affections wholly wrong, hating him that made them, his laws and

every thing good. It is declared, that men are by nature wholly incapable of any thing morally good, till their nature is changed; that this change can be effected only by the direct and immediate influence of the spirit of God; that the sinner can do nothing, which shall be a reason with God for granting this influence. On the contrary, whenever it is granted, it is done in a perfectly arbitrary manner. It is granted only to those, who were elected from eternity, without any reason, but the will of God, for distinguishing them from among others, all of whom were equally undeserving. This election extends to a certain definite portion of mankind; all the rest, no more undeserving than they, and no more sinful, than they were created, are passed by, and left to hopeless, remediless, everlasting ruin.

I believe that no part of this statement will be objected to as giving an unfair or distorted view of the orthodox faith. But we find it not easy to bring our moral feelings to acquiesce in the doctrine, as it is thus presented. Something more is required than a few detached texts so interpreted, as to express a meaning, that is irreconcileable with the general import and uniform tenor of the scriptures; fortified by a metaphysical argument of a very subtle and abstruse nature, the force of which has always been a subject of controversy, without any reference to its connexion with a doctrine of religion; and which, were its force unquestionable, has no necessary connexion with the doctrine of religion, which it is brought to support.

LETTER X.

Atonement. Analogy of God's government in the present life. Civil government. Dr. Woods' objections considered. Moral influence of the two systems. Reasoning in the Letters to Trinitarians &c. incorrectly stated.

Upon the doctrine of the atonement, which comes next under consideration, I wish to call your attention only to a few remarks, suggested by some of the exceptions offered to my statement and defence of my opinions upon this subject in my former Letters.

To what is said (pp. 199, 200) respecting the judgment to be drawn from the analogy of God's government in the present world, as to the efficacy of repentance, the short and satisfactory reply is, that this analogy, had we no other knowledge on the subject, would certainly leave us, as we find it always has left men, unenlightened by divine revelation, in some doubt on the subject. It would leave us in uncertainty whether repentance would be accepted alone, or some expiation be required. That uncertainty and doubt I have shown, revelation has removed, and has taught us, what reason, and our experience of the present operation of the divine government, could not teach—"that if the wicked will turn from his wickedness, he shall live"—that pardon is sure to the sincerely penitent.

And as to the analogy of civil government; there are circumstances of difference in the case, extremely obvious, which are sufficient to invalidate all conclusions drawn by reasoning from the one to the

other. Thus, when we are asked (p. 200) whether human government "holds out to criminals the prospect of pardon, in case they repent, and what would be the consequence of their doing it;" it is sufficient to say, that the reasons why they do not, are such, as do not apply at all to the divine government. It is wholly from the imbecility and imperfection of human government, that it is obliged to inflict the punishment, which has been incurred by guilt, upon him, who, sincerely penitent, has returned to virtue and obedience. At human tribunals, from which the dispositions and purposes of the heart are concealed, where there is no infallible judge to determine, when repentance is sincere, and reformation unfeigned and effectual, it may be impossible to avoid the fatal consequences, that would follow from admitting the principle, of allowing repentance to expiate guilt. But at the tribunal of Him, whose knowledge is perfect, and who can see the whole of the case, there can be no such danger; and "what more dreadful consequences still would follow the admission of such a principle" in the government of a Being, who has no occasion to resort to expedients in his administration, from want of power or defect of knowledge, it is not easy to imagine.

When it is asked again (p. 200) "If the attributes of God demand, that the punishment should not outlive the crime, on what ground are the dispensations of the *present* life to be justified," the reply is grounded on the obvious distinction between the final retributions of the future life, which are

those in question; and those dispensations of the present, which make part of a state of discipline and trial, and upon which the final retributions are to be grounded. It may be very reasonable and just, that the natural consequences of a course of vice should continue to follow a man in this life, and make a part of the trial of his virtue, after he has sincerely repented, and wholly corrected the habit; when a principle of the divine administration would be neither reasonable nor just, that should pursue him with those consequences into a state of final and eternal retribution.

Upon the objection (p. 202) to my sense of redemption and sacrifice, I think it sufficient to refer you to the Letter in which it is contained. You will then judge, whether, as I had clearly shown that the term *redemption* was used in the two most important cases of deliverance, to which it was applied in the Old Testament, in a certain sense; it be not consistent with sound principles of interpretation to suppose, that it was meant to be applied in a similar sense in the New; and whether, as the most orthodox will not pretend, that the term *sacrifice*, as applied to Christ, is to be understood in its *literal* sense, the account which I have given of its use and meaning be not satisfactory; and whether the reasons I have assigned be not sufficient to show, that it is used in the sense which I have given it. I am willing also to rest the third objection, (p. 203) relative to the mode of interpretation of several passages of scripture, on the exposition of those texts in my Letter; reminding you only, that

while unitarians give a distinct and intelligible meaning to those texts, the orthodox in reply, though they deny that meaning to be the true one, and affirm, that "those texts teach the doctrine of the atonement, as it is commonly held; and that they assert it in language as plain, express and emphatic, as any which can be imagined;" yet do not tell us, though they have been called upon to do it, what the doctrine is, that they so expressly assert, and plainly teach.

Dr. Woods complains (p. 204) of unitarians putting a forced construction upon scripture, and that there is no likeness between those passages of scripture, which relate to the work of redemption, and the unitarian doctrine, as expressed in my Letters. He has been careful to guard against the possibility of the charge being retorted by putting it out of our power to institute the comparison for the purpose, as to the orthodox doctrine; not having given us in the present or the former publication any distinct statement of that doctrine.

With what reason, let me ask, can it be said, as the fourth objection states, that the unitarian scheme "takes away the difference, which the scripture uniformly makes between the sufferings of Christ and of his apostles?" Will it follow, because we deny the sufferings of Christ to be properly vicarious, that they were therefore of no more importance, than those of the subordinate agents in accomplishing the purposes of his mission? We certainly do attribute a value, and importance, and efficacy to the sufferings and death, as well as to every part of the life and char-

acter of the Saviour, which we allow to those of no other person. Instead of believing, as Dr. Woods seems to intimate, (p. 204) that excepting this vicarious suffering, we are at least as much indebted to Paul as to Jesus Christ; we regard the distinction between them as of the utmost importance. Is it no distinction, that one is the Lord and master, the other the servant? That Jesus was the direct and immediate messenger of God to men; to reveal to us his will and his purposes; while Paul was only the ambassador of Jesus, to declare to us the doctrine, in which he had been instructed by him? Is there nothing in the number and splendor of the miracles, by which Jesus proved his peculiar relation to the Father and commission from him to men, to distinguish them from those, by which Paul and the other apostles confirmed the authority, which they professed to derive from Jesus as their master, and head? Jesus taught as one having authority,—an authority derived immediately from the Father; Paul and Peter, and James, and John, as those, who derived their authority and received their doctrine from Jesus.

As to the comparative moral influence of the two systems, it must be judged of by other marks than those, which Dr. Woods has mentioned, and from those marks you will probably doubt, whether his conclusions are correct. Is it "that scheme of atonement, which gives the highest view of the evil of sin, and of the displeasure of God against it," or that which gives the most just, rational, and scriptural, that "will have the most powerful ten-

dency to lead men to repentance?" Will men be more seriously and practically affected by a system, which so aggravates the guilt of every sin, as to leave no room for degrees of wickedness, and no proportion between sinners, and condemns all to equal degrees of ill desert, and of divine wrath; than by that, which leaves room for different degrees of guilt? (p. 207.) And can it be supposed, that sinners are more likely to be brought to repentance by the thought, that an innocent being has suffered for their sins, instead of the guilty; than that repentance only can secure their pardon, and that repentance only is required by a merciful God? Especially can it be thought, that the "evil of sin and the abhorrence with which God regards it, are better displayed by the punishment of the innocent instead of the guilty, than by granting pardon to the guilty upon their repentance? Nor can I perceive how, by the doctrine of atonement, (p. 208) a "more glorious display was made of the divine love." Was there more love manifested in requiring the punishment of sin, than in freely remitting it to the penitent? In refusing to forgive the penitent, till an innocent person had voluntarily taken the punishment in his stead, than in accepting penitence and future good conduct, as a reason for freely forgiving the past? Is it a less display of the love of God to men, if he effected our salvation by Jesus Christ by making us fit subjects of his favour by his whole ministry on earth, than if he effected the same by inflicting upon him all the punishment, which sinners had deserved?

In p. 214, a fair statement is not given of my reasoning. I should not notice it, as it is in itself of very little consequence, but that every instance of this kind, which the reader does not detect, serves to impair his confidence in the soundness of the writer, and thus to affect the credit of the cause he supports. I am represented as reasoning thus:—"The scriptures *in many places* speak of God as merciful, and ready to forgive the penitent without expressly referring to any atonement; therefore forgiveness rests solely on the mercy of God and the repentance of sinners, and the atonement has nothing to do with it, except as it may be conducive to repentance." Such a conclusion would evidently be unwarranted by the premises, too large for them to support. But the fact is, the representation is not correct, and you find no such reasoning as is stated, and nothing, that a reader of common understanding and tolerable attention could be supposed so to misunderstand, as to believe that it meant, what is attributed to it. I request you, however, to examine the passage referred to; where you will find, that my argument was directed against this assertion of Dr. Woods in his Letters to Unitarians, that "God has told us, that we must *rely upon the* atoning blood of his son, *as the sole ground of forgiveness.* I challenged Dr. Woods to inform us *where God has told us this.* But he has not done it. I then proceeded, not to state *generally*, as I am represented to have done, "that the scriptures, *in many places*, without any reference to any kind of

atonement, refer the forgiveness of sin solely to the mercy of God ;" but *specifically*, that this is done by Isaiah, by David, by John the Baptist, by our Saviour, and by Peter, in texts, which are quoted. And these quotations you will perceive are made for the purpose of repelling the assertion, " that the atoning blood of Christ is the *sole* ground of forgiveness." And you will find it accompanied with no such reasoning as is alleged. No inference is drawn. The language of the sacred writers is left to speak for itself, and the reader is left to draw his own conclusions. The reasoning is not mine, but Dr. Woods'. You will judge, therefore, where the ridicule ought to fall, when he proceeds to show its absurdity, by its application in analogous cases.

LETTER XI.

Divine Influence. Love to Christ. Inconclusive reasoning. What is due from the Orthodox and Unitarians to each other.

In the concluding Chapter of Dr. Woods' Reply, I find little occasion for any further remarks. So far as relates to the doctrine of divine influence, I would only recal your attention to the point at issue between us. It is the more necessary, as it is not kept sufficiently in view by Dr. Woods in his Reply. I had stated it very explicitly in the VIth Letter of my former publication; and the correctness of that statement is not called in question. But if, as is virtually admitted, the statement there made is correct, if the orthodox doctrine of divine

influence is,—*that *it is confined to the elect—granted to them in a perfectly arbitrary manner—that its effects take place, without any agency or co-operation of theirs, they being wholly passive in it—that it is the irresistible, unaided work of God, which man can do nothing either to assist or prevent—that it is never granted to the non-elect, in consequence of which, they can never be regenerated, and their final salvation is impossible;* I ask, with what propriety it can be said, (p. 218) *that the divine influence effectually directs and regulates the liberty and activity of those who are saved,* and *induces* them to use their voluntary and moral powers in a right manner? I ask what is *the liberty* of a being, who is impelled by an irresistible influence, which he can neither assist nor prevent, and what is *his activity,* who is under an influence which produces its effects, *without any agency or cooperation of his,* and in which he is *wholly passive?* I ask also how he can be said to be *induced* to the right use of his voluntary and moral powers, when he is impelled by an influence, which produces its effects without his agency or cooperation? And with what propriety *the use of moral powers* can be spoken of, where the agent is declared *to be wholly passive?*

I think it unnecessary to follow Dr. Woods in his further remarks on this subject. By recurring to the discussion of the subject in my former Letters, you

* I speak of that divine influence which is peculiar to Calvinism, as distinguished from that, which Unitarians admit. For it is with the former only that I have any concern, as it is that only about which there is any controversy.

will be able to perceive how the argument stands, and whether any thing, that has been said in reply, serves to support that *special divine influence in changing the nature of him, who is the subject of it,* which is the only point of controversy. And with respect to the several other topics, which fill up the remaining pages of the Reply, I am satisfied with referring you to the corresponding passages in the last of my former Letters.

You will perceive, I think, without difficulty, the fallacy that runs through the reasoning on page 221. If our love to Christ depends on the nature and value of the benefits we receive from him, will it follow, as Dr. Woods intimates, that we may owe no higher love to God, than to a perfect man? Will Dr. Woods say, that we can have received the same *benefits* from any man, or any finite being, as from God? that we can be as dependant on him? Will it follow also, as is further asserted, that the mother of Jesus, and departed saints are as proper objects of our highest religious affections as the Saviour? Have we received from them the *same benefits?* are they the messengers and instruments of God for conferring upon us as great and important blessings? Besides, you will remark that other terms are introduced with other very different additional meanings. Not only love, but confidence, veneration and worship, we are told, will be due in the same manner to inferior beings, as to the supreme God. You will probably think it follows not very clearly and certainly, that a dependant finite being is entitled to our *worship*, to

our supreme religious worship, because it is the instrument of God in conferring upon us such blessings, as entitle it even to a high degree of *love and gratitude and veneration*. Nor that we can put the *same trust* in a being, all whose power of protecting us or doing us good, is derived; as in that infinite and independent Being, from whom it derives its power. But if Dr. Woods' reasoning is to be relied upon, all this, and more than this, will follow from the single proposition, that our *love* to the Saviour will depend on the nature and value of the benefits we receive from him, and not upon the rank he holds in the scale of being.

I have only a few remarks to make on the subject, which occupies the paragraph preceding that, which closes the book before me; relating to the spirit, disposition, and conduct, which are due from unitarians and trinitarians to each other. In some of the sentiments expressed I cheerfully accord; but I think that Dr. Woods himself can hardly fail to perceive, how utterly inconsistent they are practically, with some others, which are pretty distinctly avowed. I think he will hardly expect, that two great bodies of men, each professing the christian faith, each receiving their doctrines from the same books, and each sincerely believing that the doctrines which they profess are those that are taught in those books; can mutually deny the christian name to each other, withhold from each other all offices of christian communion, and consider each other as idolaters, enemies of truth, and deniers of the Lord; and yet maintain

"uninterrupted, the advantages and pleasures of civil, social, and literary intercourse, the offices of kindness, and the feelings of benevolence." We have seen for a few years past, and daily see more and more distinctly, what are the effects of an approach to the state, which Dr. Woods seems to contemplate with complacency, as that which ought to take place. The progress toward such a state of separation, and consequent alienation, unitarians contemplate with regret and grief, but without alarm and without anxiety. They have no fears and no doubts respecting the final result. They have been faithful and uniform and constant in their endeavours to avert it. But if it is forced upon them, they are ready to meet the exigence. But they will still not cease from their endeavours, in the spirit of forbearance, gentleness and christian charity, to prevent a schism, in their apprehension so causeless, so unworthy of the professed disciples of Jesus Christ, and so fatal, as they believe it to be, should the efforts of those who attempt it succeed, to the spirit and the interests of the religion of Christ.

We are not insensible, that the difference of opinion upon important points of christian doctrine is great. We probably think it as great, and of as much practical moment, as does the writer of the Reply; but we think it not sufficient to justify such a separation, as has for several years been openly advocated, and strenuously attempted by some,—we are willing to believe honest, but certainly very violent and indiscreet, orthodox

divines. We believe there is still a foundation of christian faith, which we hold in common, broad enough for all honest men, who have any considerable portion of the christian spirit, to stand together in peace, to worship together, and to hold fellowship in all the ordinances of the gospel. For we believe the proper grounds of this fellowship to consist, not in articles of speculative belief only, or chiefly, but in the temper, spirit, and life of the gospel. This we are confident too is the sentiment and feeling of the great body of orthodox christians, as well as unitarians. Whatever importance they may on either side attach to their particular views of certain distinguishing doctrines, they are yet willing to allow the christian name, and to extend their christian fellowship to all those, who profess the common faith, and manifest their sincerity in it by the spirit of the gospel in their lives. The sentiment intimated by Dr. Woods with sufficient clearness to be intelligible; that trinitarians are considered as idolaters by unitarians; and that the faith, which *they* profess, on the other hand, is regarded by trinitarians as *another gospel*, in such a sense, as to render it *inconsistent with their allegiance to Christ*, to *have any fellowship with them in the peculiarities of their faith and worship*, we believe is not well founded. Unitarians may believe, as some of them have expressed, that to render *supreme religious worship* to Jesus Christ, and to the Holy Spirit, as a person distinct from the Father, is idolatry; and yet may be far from charging trinitarians with being idolaters, who render such worship; because

they have no doubt of their doing it with a pure conscience, and with the full conviction of their minds, that it is what their christian faith and profession require. They think, therefore, that what, considered abstractly, is idolatrous worship, is not so to them, they believing it to be that, which the gospel prescribes. On the other hand, we are unable to imagine what part of the unitarian worship can be offensive to a trinitarian, or that it is possible for a trinitarian to think it inconsistent with his allegiance to Christ to unite in it. That it does not contain all that he thinks it should, is surely no good reason for refusing to join in what it does contain that is pure. The writer of this has had occasion to worship in orthodox assemblies and to attend the ministrations of orthodox divines. He has attended such worship with great satisfaction; very seldom has he known a respectable orthodox minister to introduce any thing into *an act of worship* in which a unitarian could not unite with him. The same, it is believed, is true with respect to unitarian ministers. They never have occasion to introduce any sentiment or language into their acts of worship, in which an orthodox worshipper, who should be present, could not cheerfully join. Very few are found on either side, who think it necessary, so far to depart from the examples of scriptural worship, and violate the decorum due to fellow-worshippers, as to intrude the peculiarities of their faith into their acts of worship, and substitute a creed for a prayer. And as respects the religious instructions of the pulpit, no man, who is

himself a fair inquirer, would be unwilling to hear the reasons which may be offered in support of opinions opposite to his own, as often, as a faithful minister would think it his duty to urge them in his public discourses.

We are as much disposed to *revere conscience* as Dr. Woods can be; but we do not suppose it requires us to separate ourselves from those, who profess the same reverence for conscience, and who give reasonable evidence of their sincerity in it; evidence that it is indeed conscience by which they are guided, and not passion, pride, or party spirit. It is our wish and endeavour also to be *faithful to the truth.* We deem it an important duty. We think that no considerations will justify us in any kind of disguise or concealment, or in withholding any exertions in our power to promote the knowledge of the truth. But we revere also the same fidelity to the truth in others; and do not feel ourselves authorized to withdraw from them, because their speculative opinions differ from ours,—because that which is truth to them is not so to us. We think that the agreement in the great principle of the love of truth and sacred regard to it and fidelity in its pursuit, forms a stronger and more reasonable bond of union, than any agreement in opinions could do.

I might make some remarks on what is implied in the last sentence of this paragraph, when it is said, "we request them, (the unitarians,) to extend to us the same indulgence and candour, and to suffer us, without reproach, to serve God

according to our own consciences." I might ask, whether a disposition has ever been discovered by unitarians, to interfere with the religious rights, or to disturb the consciences of the orthodox, as is here intimated. The insinuation is certainly not very consistent with another charge, with which, till very lately, we have been constantly assailed, viz. that we are indifferent whether truth or error prevail; that we think it of little importance what men believe, and lay no stress even on our own opinions. But each of these representations is equally erroneous.

It is, however, of little importance for Dr. Woods or myself to speak of what is in fact the general spirit and conduct of unitarians and of the orthodox, in relation to each other. The religious community have fortunately the means of judging of it from other sources of information. The spirit that pervades their respective publications; the principles which they defend, the measures they respectively pursue, the language which they think it proper to apply; especially the treatment they bestow upon individuals, where they have the power; these will form the grounds of judgment, and the public judgment, we doubt not, will eventually be correct. When Dr. Woods can refer to the most respectable unitarian writers as declaring, that they do not consider the orthodox as christians, and holding them up to public odium, as preaching another gospel, and denying the Lord that bought them; ranking them in a class with deists and atheists, Jews and Mahometans, and declaring them to be no better

entitled, than either of them, to the name of christians,—and denouncing them, as deists in disguise; when he can point us to associations of unitarian ministers expelling from their body, and withdrawing all ministerial intercourse and christian fellowship from members, of good character and exemplary lives, because they have exchanged unitarian for trinitarian sentiments;—to unitarian churches excommunicating their members for the same reason;—to individual unitarians refusing to have fellowship in christian ordinances in a trinitarian church,—and to the Principals of unitarian theological seminaries, expelling serious and conscientious pupils for the expression of opinions, to which they have been led by honest inquiry, with the harsh declaration that such opinions are not to be tolerated;—when he can tell us of the exertions of unitarian ministers for a course of years to excite alarm in the public mind, to raise opposition against the orthodox, and to destroy the influence and usefulness of orthodox ministers, and to excite in others a fear to allow themselves in free religious inquiry, lest they should find themselves obliged to adopt orthodox views and thus expose themselves to the loss of reputation, of usefulness, and of the christian name,—to excommunication, and all the civil and social inconveniences which bigotry and violence have it in their power to inflict in an enlightened age and under a free government; when he can do this, he may, with some reason, appeal, in behalf of his injured brethren, not to our *candour and indulgence only,* but to our sense of

decency and justice, and "request, that he and his friends may be suffered without reproach," and without being subjected to still more serious evils than reproaches, "to serve God according to their own consciences."*

It was not my intention to notice any other instances, in which Dr. Woods has found a meaning in my words different from what I presume readers in general discovered; but the last paragraph of his Reply contains one, which is of such a nature, that I am unwilling it should pass unnoticed. He quotes me as saying, not only that the moral influence of the unitarian doctrine is far more certain, and powerful, and salutary, and purifying than the influence of orthodoxy, (which is not correctly stated, as the reference is to a single doctrine only and not to the whole scheme); *but that the virtue of unitarians is of a more pure, generous, and elevated kind, than that of their opponents.* You will probably be a little surprised, on turning to the passage referred to, to find that the words I actually made use of, instead of those just cited, were the following: *The virtue that is produced by cheerful views, and by the contemplation of kindness, benevolence, and mercy in God, is of a more pure,*

* In connexion with the paragraph above, the reader is invited to turn to the files of the Panoplist for a few of the last years of its publication, to the discourse of the Rev. Lyman Beecher at the ordination in Park street, to Dr. Spring's *Tribute to New England*, to Dr. Mason's farwell sermon, to Dr. Miller's Letters on unitarianism, to the Letter of Dr. Mason to Mr. Dewey on his expulsion from the Theological Seminary at New York, to the transactions of councils and consociations at Coventry, Deerfield, Brooklyn and Wareham, and of associations in the vicinities of Weymouth, Hadley, Deerfield, Pelham, Charlemont, &c.

generous, and elevated kind, than that which arises from cold, austere, and gloomy views, and the contemplation of severe, unrelenting, vindictive justice, and the execution of eternal wrath. After quoting me in the manner stated, he adds, *I cannot bring myself to contest this last point with unitarians.* Had I used the words which he has represented me as using, the censure implied in thus declining the contest would have fallen with some force. As it is, the reader will judge of its force.

In the discussions, which I have now brought to a close, as in my former Letters, it has been my wish and endeavour to give a correct view of the religious opinions maintained by myself, as I suppose, in common with unitarians generally, upon the several subjects which have been brought into view; and of the mode of reasoning by which those opinions are to be defended.

It has been also my faithful endeavour to do justice to the highly respected author of the Reply to those Letters, in the notice which I have had occasion to take of his book. The remarks, which I have thought myself obliged to make, have in some cases not been such as I could have wished to find a place for. Whether they are fair and just is submitted to the judgment of the reader. I shall extremely regret the circumstance, if any of them shall appear to have been made under a misapprehension of the meaning of the writer, or are of such a nature as to give a false impression; and shall be grateful to him, who will correct the error, and remove the wrong impression.

Having now completed my design in these Letters, I take my leave of those whom I address, and of the subject, with the devout prayer to the Author of light and of love, that the labours which have been employed on both sides may not be fruitless. And if they shall serve in any degree to give to readers on each side of the controversy more distinct and satisfactory views upon the subjects to which they relate, and a clearer understanding of the reasons upon which they are grounded; some benefit will be derived to the cause of christian truth; and in proportion as the views of christians are enlarged and rendered more clear and distinct by discussions conducted with seriousness, and with a spirit of moderation; it is to be hoped, that better feelings will prevail, and christian charity be promoted; and that christians, instead of being driven asunder by differences of opinion inseparable from a state of imperfect knowledge, will allow themselves to be drawn together by the kind spirit of the gospel, which is common to true christians of all sects, and of every denomination.

A

Postscript

TO THE

SECOND SERIES OF LETTERS

ADDRESSED TO

TRINITARIANS AND CALVINISTS,

IN REPLY TO

THE REMARKS OF DR. WOODS

ON

THOSE LETTERS.

BY HENRY WARE, D. D.
Hollis Professor of Divinity in the University at Cambridge.

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POSTSCRIPT.

I KNOW not whether an apology to the public for the late appearance of this pamphlet, or for its appearance at all, be more reasonably required. The explanation which I have to offer in both respects is drawn from the circumstances of the case. I had considered the controversy as closed with my last publication; as I supposed that all had then been said on both sides, that would be likely to be interesting and useful to the christian community; and that not much further light would be thrown on the subject, should it be continued. I thought also, that no ordinary circumstances could require a discussion to be continued beyond the limits, which this had already passed; or justify those engaged in it in laying a further tax on the public attention.

When, therefore, the publication, which is the subject of my present notice, appeared in September last, it was my wish, and intention at first, to suffer it to pass without a reply. I was unwilling to have the public attention drawn off from the

great question between us, to a mere trial of logical acuteness, and controversial skill; which seemed to me to be too much the character, that the discussion had already assumed. I believed too, that the public was interested, as it ought to be, solely in ascertaining the truth or the balance of evidence in the great points at issue, and not at all in the dexterity with which the weapons of controversy are employed on either side; and I doubted whether the means of making up an opinion on the subject were likely to be much increased by the controversy being prolonged. I was desirous, therefore, if upon mature reflection it should seem consistent with justice to myself, and to the cause in which I had offered my services, to be silent, and leave the subject at rest.

A more careful review of the Remarks has led me to think, that I ought to depart from my first intention, and that what I have to offer in reply to those remarks will be thought of sufficient importance for my justification, in claiming again the public indulgence.

On the use of the words *innocence*, *purity*, and *holiness*, the charge of inconsistency is again urged, which was distinctly and fully answered in my last Letters. It might have been sufficient now to refer you to that answer, as it is contained in my Second Series of Letters (pp. 7—15) for a complete refutation of all that is here said. By comparing that passage with the charge here again repeated, some surprise will probably be excited, that Dr. Woods

should choose to draw the reader's attention again to the subject; and that he should be willing to have the manner, in which the inconsistency was made out, again exposed to view. This and several other instances, in which an inconsistency was attempted to be made out by a palpable misrepresentation of the meaning of what I had said, I was then willing to attribute to inadvertence, carelessness, or any other cause, that should exonerate Dr. Woods from *intentional unfairness* or *want of argumentative justice*. The present repetition of the charge, upon the same grounds with which it was then made, will justify me in putting a different construction upon it.

Nothing more, I am satisfied, can now be needed, but for you to read the passage just referred to, together with the distinct statement of my opinion on this subject on the 20th and 21st pages of my first Letters. It will there appear, that what I have constantly maintained, and respecting which you will find no contradiction, and no confusion in the use of words, is, That man is born into the world innocent and pure,—free from all moral corruption;—by which I always mean, that he is not a sinner, in the first place, by having another's sin imputed to him, before having actually sinned himself personally; nor, in the next place, by having a nature given him by God, that is wholly sinful, or prone only to sin:— That man is by nature perfectly free from any quality or tendency, that should make him hateful to his Maker, or deserving of any punish-

ment at his hands, and that he continues so, until he has become the subject of some moral exercises:—That there is nothing in his nature, which makes it more certain that his first moral exercises will be sinful, than that they will be holy; because there is nothing that inclines him more to that which is morally bad, than to that which is morally good. It was to prove and illustrate this, that, among other arguments, the early character of children was introduced; showing that it is always a mixed character, consisting of some right affections and some that are wrong, and manifesting some tendencies and dispositions to sin and some to holiness, as early as any moral character or tendency can be observed. This agrees with the experience of every parent and instructer of children, and this I considered as decisive evidence, that there could be nothing *previously existing in the nature of the child, the tendency of which was exclusively either to the one or the other*,—nothing, therefore, by which it was constituted or proved to be by nature either holy or sinful. It seemed to me plain, that if the disposition and tendency of nature were wholly sinful, nothing but sinful volitions and sinful actions could follow; so that if, as early as we can discern any exercise of the moral powers in a child, we can discover some that are right, it is rendered certain, that it *is not by nature totally depraved*. I mentioned some of this kind, which Dr. Woods admits to be the common traits of early life, but which he denies to be of *the nature of holiness*, and consequently does not allow to possess *moral qualities*.

But if those amiable qualities and dispositions and actions are no evidences of *holiness* or *a good moral state*, I see not how the opposite qualities, dispositions and actions can be evidences of *sinfulness*, or *a bad moral state*. If the wrath, envy, falsehood, selfishness, which are alleged by the orthodox as the evidences of sinfulness in children, are so in reality; then the kind dispositions, veracity, and love of rectitude, which exist as early, must be admitted as marks of holiness. If the former are of a moral nature, the latter are equally so. Nothing I think could show more clearly how closely the doctrine is felt by the orthodox to be pressed at this point, than for Dr. Woods to be driven to the necessity of persisting in the denial of moral qualities to the dispositions and actions referred to. It is saying, that the indulgence of the bad passions *is morally wrong*, and yet that the acting under the influence of the opposite good ones *is not morally right;* that to hate a fellow being and try to do him harm is evidence of *a bad moral state*, and yet, that to love him, and be disposed to do him good, is no mark of *a good moral state*. The argument, you will perceive, on this point, wholly turns upon the question, *whether the good dispositions and affections, which are admitted to be characteristic of early life, are of a moral character or not.*

That it is necessary, in order to support the doctrine of native depravity, *to assert that they are not*, is alone, to my mind, a decisive proof of the falsity of the doctrine, and of the radical unsoundness of the whole system, of which it lies at the founda-

tion. For, consider what are the natural practical consequences. If the virtues, the amiable qualities, and good dispositions and affections *of children* are not to be regarded as moral qualities; if they are pronounced to be no marks of moral goodness; the same qualities and dispositions will be no marks of goodness and of a regenerate state *in persons in mature life.* Marks and evidences of regeneration of a different kind will be relied upon, and regeneration itself will be regarded as a kind of metaphysical change, which one may undergo without any reference to these traits of character, or any alteration in his dispositions or practice in respect to them. Thus the holiness, which is supposed to constitute a regenerate state, will come to be regarded as something wholly distinct from practical virtue; to consist either in speculative opinions, or in some abstract metaphysical exercises, which are distinct from all that is practical. And the regenerate person will be one, who believes in certain doctrines, has *forced his heart to acquiesce* in those doctrines; and under their influence having certain powerful exercises, which he considers as constituting religion, will be satisfied with them, while he is no more faithful than he was before in performing the social and domestic duties. More than this; while he yields himself up to what he considers the peculiar exercises of religion, he may even be less attentive than he was before to the government of his temper, to the care of his family, to truth and uprightness in the intercourse of life, to promote the happiness of all about

him. Nor can he be reasonably censured for this, if it be true, that the kind dispositions, the love of truth and rectitude, and the acts of justice and benevolence, which he thus neglects and undervalues, have no moral good in them, and accordingly have no tendency to recommend him to God.

I have already said, that in the present instance, as in the former publication, Dr. Woods has made out his charge of inconsistency by a palpable misrepresentation of what I had said. He asserts, that I "frequently suggest, that the innocence, purity, and simplicity of little children, *are not moral qualities, that they imply no holiness, and no moral character.*" (p. 295.) He does not tell you where the suggestion is to be found, and you will look for it in vain in any part of my Letters; and not only so, but you will find *the opposite to this assertion uniformly implied and repeatedly insisted upon.*

Another unfounded assertion, of which considerable use is made, is, "that I allowed, that in the use of the phrase, *destitute of holiness*, I had used a phrase, which expresses a meaning that I did not intend to express." By turning to the page to which he has referred, you will find, that no such concession was made. And you will learn, that, in the very passage referred to, I not only made no such concession, but on the contrary clearly showed, that my meaning in the passage in question had been misrepresented; and further asserted, *that every reader, not excepting Dr. Woods himself, knew, that the meaning which he fixed upon my words was different from that, which I did intend by them.*

This charge, Dr. Woods has not ventured to contradict. Indeed my meaning in the phrase in question was too obvious to be mistaken by a reader of common attention, and of the most ordinary intelligence.

Under such circumstances, you will not think it strange, that I should, as I did then, pronounce *that* to be *an unlucky phrase*, which had been perverted, to say the least, to so singular a purpose. Not an *unlucky phrase* in the sense in which Dr. Woods chooses repeatedly to echo it; as if I admitted, that it justly exposed me to the charge of inconsistency; but in a sense not very flattering to him, who had made such a use of it. I can never hope to be *so lucky* in the choice of words, as to escape inconsistency, if such interpretation be put upon them.

Dr. Woods has repeated (p. 303) the charge, which he had before exhibited in his first publication, and repeated in his second, viz. "*That Unitarians consider a difficulty, which they are not able to solve, as sufficient to disprove a doctrine, supported by clear and conclusive evidence.*" This was a charge, as I supposed, so utterly without foundation, and which did so great a wrong to Unitarians, that I called on Dr. Woods to support his charge by proof. He now admits, that he cannot refer to any author, by whom the principle is avowed; yet still insists upon its truth. But its truth, as he has stated the charge, can only be proved by *the general avowal of the principle*

by Unitarians. For the charge is applied to Unitarians universally, and it is an explicit charge of adopting the principle. To say, as he does, that he can produce examples, in which this mode of reasoning is exhibited, I shall show, will not answer his purpose, for this reason, that it goes upon the supposition that *he* has such access to the heart of the writer, that he knows the secret influence by which his judgment is biassed, of which the writer himself declares himself unconscious. "I could refer," says Dr. Woods, "to many a book, *and particularly to the one, to which I have offered a reply, and to the part of it, which relates to this very subject, as exhibiting the very mode of reasoning here complained of.*" The charge is here sufficiently distinct, explicit, and individual. The author of the Letters to Trinitarians &c. is here directly and personally charged with furnishing an example of the mode of reasoning objected against, viz. *considering a difficulty, which he is unable to solve, as sufficient to disprove a doctrine supported by clear and conclusive evidence.* And what is the proof upon which Dr. Woods is willing to risk this assertion? "The evidence," he says, "which supports the doctrine of natural depravity, is *in my view clear and conclusive;* and I think it would be so in Dr. Ware's view, *were it not for certain difficulties, which he is not able to solve.*" But is Dr. Woods yet to learn, that evidence, which to one mind may be *clear and conclusive*, to another equally honest and faithful, may wholly fail to produce conviction? Or is *his mind* the standard, by which all others

are to be tried, and there must be some intellectual or moral defect in any one, that is not satisfied with the same reasoning, and convinced by the same evidence that satisfies him? The fact is, as I stated at large in my Letters, that the evidence which he has brought for native depravity is, *in my mind*, wholly insufficient to prove the doctrine, and I am perfectly satisfied, that I have shown with the clearness of a moral demonstration, that the orthodox doctrine of native depravity is taught neither by reason, experience, nor scripture. And with this strong conviction, I might, on the same grounds and with equal reason, have said, that Dr. Woods and the orthodox were prevented from coming to the same result that I had, not because the evidence in the case was not conclusive, but because there are some *metaphysical difficulties* in accounting for the origin and the universality of sin, on any other supposition, but that of native depravity and original disposition and tendency; *and the orthodox consider a difficulty which they are not able to solve as sufficient to disprove a doctrine supported by clear and conclusive evidence.* That I refrained from this mode of reasoning was not because the thought did not occur to me; but because I thought it not right to exhibit a charge, however true I might believe it to be, which, from the nature of the thing, was incapable of proof; and quite indecorous, without the clearest proof, to attribute to my opponent so great an intellectual or moral defect, as is implied in such a charge.

But I have something further to observe, with respect to these *metaphysical difficulties* on the one hand, which have so much weight with the orthodox; and *moral difficulties* on the other hand, which Unitarians think so important. There can be no doubt, that each of them is deserving of consideration; and no one can be intitled to the character of a fair and liberal inquirer, who wholly overlooks either of them, in making up his mind, as to the foundation of the two opposite systems. But suppose the direct evidence from experience and scripture were equal on both sides, (which I am fully persuaded, however, is very far otherwise, and that it is decisive on the side of the Unitarian faith,) suppose it were equal, I say, and our opinion were to be decided by our estimate of the weight, which we think should be allowed to the respective difficulties, by which each system is pressed; the question then for us to decide will be, to which of the difficulties it is reasonable for us to allow the most influence in determining our choice.

Now the difficulties, as I have stated, which press upon the Calvinistic scheme, are wholly of a *moral nature;* those objections which the opposite scheme has to encounter are *metaphysical only.* The Calvinist has to reconcile his scheme with the moral character and moral government of God, and with the moral and accountable condition of man; and this, he will not deny, is an arduous task, and one that requires him to subdue the feelings of nature, and to silence the voice of reason. The Unitarian, on the other hand, can never so fully

explain the nature of moral liberty, the influence of motives, the consistency of contingency with foreknowledge, and the existence of certainty without necessity, that the scheme shall be pressed with no remaining difficulty. But it seems to me, that a little just reflection will decide for us, which of these difficulties ought to have the most weight, on the supposition that the direct and positive evidence on that side be not absolutely conclusive, nor invalidated by opposite evidence. And the single reflection I think is this, that we are far more competent to judge upon moral, than upon metaphysical questions, being capable of the most clear and satisfactory knowledge of moral truth, while we can only arrive at uncertain conclusions in our metaphysical inquiries. And this is particularly the case, as to the great metaphysical and moral questions, which are brought into view in this controversy.

Of the nature of efficient causes, of the manner in which the will is influenced by motives, and what degree of power the agent may or may not have over the will, independent of motives, or in limiting their influence, we can have but imperfect knowledge, and ought to be modest in our decisions: but we may be perfectly confident in pronouncing what is, and what is not, consistent with moral rectitude. We are certain that malevolence, cruelty, injustice can never be right, and can never be the attributes of a holy being.

How it is possible for God to make a being capable of moral freedom, and how he can foreknow

the free actions of such a being, we may not be able to explain; but we can certainly know, that a being morally good, will not make a single creature, much less a whole race of beings, so inclined by nature to evil, and indisposed to good, as to be from the first the objects of his hatred and wrath, and continue so till their nature is changed by a divine influence, which he never grants them. And we are sure, that he will not require of such beings a change, which he has made it *morally impossible* for them to experience, and yet inflict eternal punishments upon them for failing to do it. Yet this I think is nothing more, than a fair statement of the moral difficulty, under which the orthodox system labours.

I perceive nothing further, that requires animadversion, till, on p. 308, we meet with the heavy charge of misrepresenting the orthodox faith in respect to the *power*, *capacity*, or *ability* of man to do, what God requires of him. "Now I did hope," says Dr. Woods, "*after all that had been written on this subject*, that Dr. Ware would never again invest orthodoxy in such false colours." But I shall take the liberty of showing, that the colours of which he complains, whether true or false, are *all* of them such, as I have taken directly from what "*has been written on the subject*," and written by the most distinguished and approved orthodox divines, and amongst them, by the author of Letters addressed to Unitarians.

He returns to the same charge again, p. 346, in a tone of pretty strong feeling.—"Before Dr. Ware

has done with this point, he repeats perhaps, *for the tenth or twentieth time*, what I am sorry he ever repeated once; I mean that vulgar charge which contains too much apparent truth to be directly denied, and yet too much falsehood to be admitted, namely, that we represent men to be, as God made them, totally depraved, *incapable* of any good till renewed by *irresistible influence*, irreversibly appointed to destruction, without any regard to their sins" &c.

No doubt Dr. Woods is sorry to have a feature of the orthodox system presented to view at all, that is so utterly irreconcileable with the moral government of God, and the moral condition of man. It has been his care, as it is that of many of the most discerning of the orthodox of the present day, to keep it out of view, as much as possible; and they usually manifest the same kind of irritation which is here expressed, whenever they are brought to the alternative, of either avowing and defending this part of the system, or of denying it, and endeavouring to repel a charge, which is admitted to contain too much apparent truth to be *directly denied*, yet, as is asserted by our author, too much falsehood to be admitted.

But, if it be so, why does he not proceed to point out what the falsehood is, which it is alleged to contain? To me it seems, that the proposition in which the charge is expressed is a very simple one, and must be either wholly true, or wholly false. It is either true or false, that Calvinism does represent man, as being by nature *incapable of any good*

till renewed by irresistible influence. If this proposition contains too much truth to be denied, I am at a loss what falsehood it can contain, until Dr. Woods shall see fit to point it out. I know his *careful concession* is, *apparent truth;* but I think he will not avail himself of the equivocation which lurks in that phrase. If it were *apparent only* and not *real truth*, it might be directly denied, because then it would be *real falsehood.*

But nothing can be more clear, and nothing is more easily proved, than that it contains only pure and unmixed truth :—that it expresses nothing more than genuine Calvinism,—nothing more than the founder of the sect and the greatest of his followers have distinctly avowed, and expressed in the same words, or in those of the same import. To the proof of this, I now proceed, requesting you to compare the complaint of Dr. Woods with the several passages, which I shall quote from a few distinguished orthodox writers.

I begin with Calvin. In the 2d chapter of the 2d book of his Institutes, he treats of the freedom of the will, and gives us with great clearness his notions on the subject of the moral power of man. He endeavours to prove, that in the primitive state of innocence, man was endowed with freedom of the will, which was lost, when he sinned; and that his descendants are born into the world inheriting his nature in its fallen state, despoiled of that power over the will, which *he* enjoyed at first; and that, without the grace of God, *man has only the power of doing evil.* This he goes on to illustrate and fortify

by reasoning. In answering the objections of the advocates of the freedom of the will, he takes occasion to show,

That the *necessity of sin* does not render man the less accountable for it, nor make it the less proper, that he should be charged with it; and on the other hand, that its being *voluntary is no proof that it could be avoided.* That exhortations, admonitions, and expostulations are not administered to no purpose, *though it be not in the power of man to obey.* That we are not to infer from the commands of God, *that man has any power of observing them.* That conditional promises do *not imply, that man has the free power of doing that,* upon which the promise is suspended; and that God is not chargeable with mocking our impotence, when *he invites us to deserve his favour, though he knows our utter inability to do it. Quos novit esse prorsus impotentes.* In fine, he defends the reasonableness of our being reproached *for not doing that, which it was not in our power to do.* Vid. Calv. Inst. Lib. II. Cap. 2, § 6, 7, 8. Cap. 4, § 8. Cap. 5, § 1, 4, 5.

With these passages before you, I ask, how Calvin could have expressed with more strength and exactness, than he has done, the sentiment, which it has given so much offence to Dr. Woods to have charged upon the orthodox? which he pronounces to be *a vulgar charge, that invests orthodoxy in false colours?*—Yet I am not afraid of being contradicted by Dr. Woods, when I assert, that a hundred instances may be quoted from the works of Calvin, in which the same sentiment is expressed with equal strength.

I pass next to the Assembly's Catechism and Confession of faith.—In exact conformity with the language used by Calvin on the subject, the Westminster divines express human inability by saying, that

"Man in his state of innocency had freedom and power to will and to do that, which was good; and that by his fall *he hath wholly lost all ability to will any spiritual good accompanying salvation*, so as a natural man," [by which is always meant, one who has not been regenerated by the special influence of the Spirit of God,] "is utterly indisposed, *disabled*, and made opposite to all good, dead in sin, and *is not able by his own strength to convert himself*, or to prepare himself thereunto."

One of the most learned Calvinistic divines of the early part of the last century was Gill. In his Body of Divinity, on the subject of regeneration, he says, that

"Previous to regeneration, men are dead, morally dead—dead in a moral sense, as to spiritual things, in all the powers and faculties of their souls:—that they have no more knowledge of them, affection for them, will to them, *or power to perform them, than a dead man has with respect to things natural.*"

In the instances hitherto produced, I have not forgotten that Dr. Woods may object, that he has precluded all inferences to be drawn from the writings of the earlier Calvinists, by having stated in his Letters to Unitarians, "That the orthodox of New England at the present day are not chargeable with the erroneous opinions of their predecessors." For although he availed himself of it then only to exonerate the orthodox from the absurdity of maintaining the Calvinistic doctrine of imputation; he may now think it desirable, as I then intimated might ere long be the case, to be rid of another unmanageable part of the old doctrine of original sin, viz. the *utter impotence of man*, and *his entire inability to do the will of God*, which was a favorite opinion of the early Calvinists;

and of which, notwithstanding the modern improvements which the system has undergone, I shall be able to find some traces in times not very far distant from the present. I shall confine myself to the mention of a few names.

President Edwards, though a contemporary with the last mentioned, Gill, is referred to in such a manner by Dr. Woods, as leads me to suppose, that he is held in as high estimation, as any other writer on the side of orthodoxy; and that his opinions, and the language in which he expresses them, are approved by *the orthodox of the present day.*

In his treatise on original sin he uses the following expressions. (Works, vol. vi. p. 322. 324.)

"So long as men are in their natural state, they not only have no good thing, but *it is impossible they should have or do any good thing.*" And again, "*It is impossible* man should be otherwise while in his natural state," that is, totally corrupt, wholly a stranger and enemy to true virtue and holiness, and *not susceptible of the things of the spirit of God*, because "they are not discerned by means of any principle in nature, but altogether by a principle that is divine, something introduced by the grace of God's holy Spirit, which is above all that is natural."

In a Sermon having this title, "Men naturally God's enemies," he has the following expressions. Speaking of the nature of man, he says,

"It is wholly infected with this enmity against God. *Every faculty and principle of action is wholly under the dominion of enmity against God.* Every faculty is entirely and perfectly subdued under it, and enslaved by it. The *understanding* is under the reigning power of this enmity. The *will* is wholly under the reigning power of it. *All the affections* are governed

by enmity against God; there is not one affection, nor one desire, that a natural man has, or that he is ever stirred up to act from, but what contains in it enmity against God A natural man is as full of enmity against God, as any viper, or any venomous beast is full of poison.

"The power of the enmity of natural man against God is so great, *that it is insuperable by any finite power.* It has too great and strong possession of the heart *to be overcome by any created power. Natural men cannot overcome their own enmity, let them strive never so much with their own hearts.*"

In another Sermon, entitled,—"Sinners in the hands of an angry God," after a very vivid representation of the fearful condition of the sinner,

"Hanging by a slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath flashing around, ready every moment to burn it asunder;" he expresses in the following very strong language the *utter impossibility* of his doing any thing to effect his escape from the danger. "You have nothing to lay hold of to save yourself; nothing to keep off the flames of wrath, nothing of your own, nothing that you ever have done, *nothing that you can do,* to induce God to spare you one moment."

Thomas Scott is another author, whose writings are so diligently circulated by the orthodox, that we are not allowed to doubt his expressing the opinions which they mean to maintain, on so important a subject, as the power possessed by men in a state of nature, and the influence by which they are to be brought into a state of grace. No books, I believe, have of late been more warmly recommended or more generally read by the orthodox, than his Force of Truth, and his Notes on the Bible. In his note on John iii. 3. we meet with the following.

"Man by nature is unholy, and *cannot relish or even discern* the excellency of true religion..... *He can neither* repent, submit,

believe, love, nor obey; but *must remain* a rebel, an enemy, &c..... He must be inwardly and effectually changed, before he can understand the nature and glory of the gospel.... The new birth must precede all the actions of the spiritual life: till that has taken place, the man can *neither see, hear, speak, walk, nor work in a spiritual manner*..... In this new birth "*a real creation is effected by his omnipotence,* (that of God.).... The regenerated sinner has the substance of all holy dispositions communicated to his soul..... When the grace of God changes the sinner's heart, he becomes possessed of *new capacities*, perceptions, affections, and dispositions, ... *becomes capable* of employments and satisfactions to which he was before an utter stranger..... The new birth is the beginning of spiritual life, without which *we can no more live a heavenly life,* than we could an earthly one without being born into this world."

In a note on 1 Cor. ii. 14. he speaks of

A *spiritual capacity* being produced by the spirit of God upon the mind. And in another on Eph. ii. 2. he says, that "death in trespasses and sins," which he considers as the unregenerate state of man, "*implies an utter incapacity* for spiritual employments and satisfactions: and a *total inability* of worshipping and obeying him with love and delight."

These expressions, and others of similar import, are to be found recurring whenever the subject admits; and the sentiments they express run through the whole work. The words and the sentiments, you perceive, are the same as those, which excite so much sensation as quoted from my letters. They are certainly not less strong, and they are repeated "*for the tenth or twentieth time,*" not in a pamphlet of 150 pages, but on a single page.

The late President Dwight is probably regarded by the orthodox as one of the ablest, the clearest, and soundest writers that has of late attempted to explain and defend the system. At least he will lie

under no suspicion of intentionally misrepresenting their views for the purpose of rendering them disgusting. In his THEOLOGY, vol. iii, pp. 92, 93, 97, 105, he says,

"No unregenerate man was probably ever convinced, except, by trying his own strength, that he was *unable*, of himself, to perform virtuous actions, ... and that he will never possess a better disposition but by the renovating agency of the spirit of God ..... Convinced at length, *that all his efforts must*, without the *immediate assistance of God*, prove entirely vain, &c. &c.... From the same source of instruction he learns the true nature of his own efforts .... he sees how *destitute* they are of real holiness, and *how unavailing* to recommend him to God. The sinner needs to understand his helplessness, and his absolute necessity of being renewed by the spirit of grace" "When the convinced sinner has *by a succession by earnest efforts* to save himself, proved his *utter inability* to accomplish the important work, he becomes convinced it is absolutely necessary for him to *cast himself* wholly upon God ..... as *incapable of renewing himself, or of being renewed, but by the power of the Holy Ghost.*" In regeneration, "God gives him a new and virtuous disposition..... The convinced sinner feels his own *utter inability* to satisfy the demands of the divine law; and to reconcile himself to God."

Page 41. "If the natural man *cannot* receive the things of the spirit of God; if they are *incapable* of being discerned without a spiritual taste and character, ... then the agency of the spirit of God in our regeneration is *absolutely necessary*" Pages 42, 43, he shows why it is *impossible* for man to regenerate himself ... and the *absolute necessity* of an *extraneous agency* to effect it.

Fuller, a popular Calvinistic divine, whose works have been much circulated and read, asserts, that

"The spirit of God, in regeneration, does *produce a new principle in the heart.*" .... our hearts "being by nature

wholly depraved, we need an *almighty and invincible* power to renew them." . . . . . and the entire *inability* of the sinner, he asserts, by the following remarkable expressions. "If a sinner could return to God of his own accord, *or even by divine influence helping or assisting him*, it must be upon the supposition of some will, wish, or desire to set about it. But if men are totally alienated from God, all desire after him must be extinct; and all the warnings, invitations, and expostulations of the word *will be ineffectual;* yea, *divine influence itself will be ineffectual, if it falls short of renewing the heart.*"

I know not what stronger language could be employed to express *inability, incapacity, want of power to any moral purpose in the unregenerate,* and the *irresistible* and *invincible* nature of that divine influence by which their first good moral feeling or act must be produced. And although Dr. Woods seems so much dissatisfied now with the phrase *irresistible influence*, and by the mark he has set upon it, is clearly to be understood as charging me with doing injustice to the orthodox, when I represent the doctrine of irresistible influence in regeneration as making a part of the orthodox faith; yet in his first publication, Letters to Unitarians, he seems to have thought quite differently on the subject. He there expressly, and at some length, defends the use of the terms *irresistible, overpowering*, and *invincible*, and shows that they are in good and legitimate use by the orthodox, and will bear an unexceptionable meaning. Nor can he complain, that I have charged the orthodox with applying them in a different sense from that which he has justified. He cannot say, that I have, in any instance, given them a meaning that is

not fully authorized by the explanation, which he has given of their force, as applied to the subject; cautiously and guardedly as he has expressed himself.

There is a volume of Sermons by Henry Martyn, a late missionary to the East, which has been recently republished here under circumstances, which authorize the presumption, that the sentiments they express are approved by the orthodox, and are such as those, who give a tone and direction to the orthodox community are willing to inculcate. In one of them I find the following passage.

"There is in the dead body no power to return to life; neither is there in the soul *any ability to attain a spiritual life, or the exercise of holy affection toward God*..... There is in the dead body no spark of life, that time or care may fan into a flame; it will remain a corpse; nothing but the power of God can raise it from the dead. *In like manner there is in the natural man no latent principle of spiritual life;* without a divine intercessor he must ever remain as he is; no good education, no good resolutions, as they are called, will ever make him a good man, except there be a *superadded principle from above*, a change wrought in him by an eternal agent, *life put into him by the spirit of God*..... *he is born guilty*, he is a child of wrath. *Antecedently to our works or even moral agency*, even in infancy, we are under the wrath of God. The account to be given of this doctrine, as we hold it, is this, that God dealt with Adam in a collective capacity, as the father of mankind; and when he became guilty, all his descendants became guilty likewise."

But perhaps those which I have quoted are the orthodox writers, to whom Dr. Woods referred in his Letters, p. 52, as men deficient in judgment, who had expressed themselves incautiously; and

are not to be relied on as expressing accurately the opinions of orthodoxy, "*as it exists at present.*"

I must then have recourse to other authorities, against which there can be no such exception; and none will surely be more unexceptionable than that of the author of Letters to Unitarians. Now as the words *incapable* and *irresistible*, and those only, are marked by Dr. Woods, I am to presume that those are the offensive words, and that he would be understood to intimate that they express more than is maintained by the orthodox.

I would then make the direct appeal to Dr. Woods, whether he is prepared to say, that man is by nature *capable*, explaining the word as he has himself explained it below, i. e. that he has the *power*, *capacity*, or *ability* to have any good inclination, &c. If his answer be, that *man has not this power*, then he had no reason to make the complaint now under consideration, although the particular word used was not one that he had used in this controversy. If on the other hand, his answer be, *that man has that power*, I must then confront this assertion with others, which he has employed upon the subject elsewhere, and especially with one of the most important points which are at issue between us. I am sensible that Dr. Woods has been more cautious and guarded in his manner of expressing himself on this subject, than orthodox writers generally; and has avoided the use of those strong expressions, which occur so frequently in their writings. Yet as I clearly showed by an induction of particulars in my first series of Letters,

he has expressed what implies, and what he undoubtedly meant should be understood as implying, *all* that other respectable orthodox divines have *distinctly said* on this subject. Unless, in the whole series of his publications he has been trifling with the religious community by the use of *cautious language* and *equivocal expressions*, saying what may mean any thing or nothing, as suits the exigence; he has in fact expressed, all that is to be found in the passages from Edwards, Scott, Martyn, &c. which have just been quoted, and all to the full extent, which is expressed in his quotations from my answer.

That I may not be liable to mistake, and to the charge of misrepresentation in the statement I am about to make, I will do it in the words which I used in my former Letters, and which, as no objection was made to the statement in Dr. Woods' Reply, I may presume is acknowledged to be correct. After giving several extracts from the Westminster Confession and Andover Creed, I proceeded pp. 117—120.

"A cursory reading of Dr. Woods' Letter on this subject might lead to an impression of something short of the doctrine expressed in these extracts; but the following sentence, taken in the connexion in which it is used, and in connexion with the other doctrines defended in his Letters, will be found, I think, to express or imply all that is contained in the fuller and more naked and undisguised statement of the Westminster Divines. He is speaking of the meaning of the words *irresistible, overpowering*, as used by orthodox writers, in reference to the divine influence upon the minds of men, when he says (p. 116,) 'What the nature of the disorder is, God knows, and is perfectly able to apply a suitable and efficacious remedy.

Now, when this almighty Physician kindly undertakes the cure of our souls, the obstinacy of the disorder yields; its resistance is taken away: that is to say, the heart is effectually cleansed from its pollution; love of sin, enmity to God, pride, ingratitude, and selfish, earthly desires are subdued, and man is induced to love God, and obey his commands.' He had before explained the orthodox faith in general by saying (p. 108,) 'We believe, that all virtue or holiness in man is to be ascribed to the influence of the divine spirit, and that, without the effectual agency of the spirit, man would have no holy affections, and perform no acts of holy obedience.'

"Now what is the disorder, to which the efficacious remedy is to be applied; and for which, as we shall see, there is no other cure? If we look back to the fifth and sixth letters of Dr. Woods, we shall find it described. It is a state of entire moral corruption, in which every man is born into the world, and in which every man continues until he is renewed by the holy spirit. It is, that men are by nature, that is, as they came first from the hand of the Creator, destitute of holiness; not only so, but subjects of an innate moral depravity, from the first inclined to evil, and while unrenewed, their affections and actions wholly wrong. This is the disease, as to its nature and extent.

"Passing to the next letters, seventh and eighth, we are told to whom and on what ground, a cure is applied. Those, who are to be delivered from this moral bondage, this original state of depravity, to be regenerated, renewed, and saved, are selected from the mass of mankind by a sovereign act of the divine will, without any thing in them, as the reason why they were chosen, rather than the others, who are passed by, left to remain in sin, and to perish for ever.

"Being thus elected, thus predestinated to eternal life, they become the subjects of the efficacious, renovating influence, under consideration. And when this 'almighty Physician undertakes the cure, the disorder yields.' He cannot be defeated. He cannot be resisted. The fact then is, that all, whom God undertakes to renew, all to whom he applies that effectual influence, which is to subdue the obstinacy of the dis-

order, are in fact renewed. The love of sin and enmity to God are subdued, and they are brought to the love of God and obedience. And this effect is produced, because he who knows the disorder has known how to apply a remedy; and has applied one, which must produce a cure.

"It follows, then, that this remedy has been applied to *no others*. Those who are not renewed have none of this influence employed upon them; for if they had, they also would have been renewed, since this influence is efficacious, cannot be resisted, cannot be defeated. Their failure then is for the want of that, which is granted to the others, and without which it was impossible for them to be renewed and saved. 'All virtue, all holiness in man is to be ascribed to this efficacious influence; without it man would have no holy affections, and would perform no acts of holy obedience.' (p. 108) Those, then, who have holiness and virtue, have it solely in consequence of their having this influence, which makes them, and cannot fail to make them holy; and those who have none, but remain unholy, sinful, enemies to God, are destitute of it solely because they have not that influence, which, if they had, could not fail to produce the same effect in them, which it has produced in others. This is but a fair and full, unexaggerated development of the doctrine, according to Dr. Woods' own statement of it. And whether it be not in every point the same as that which is more clearly stated in the Westminster Confession, every one can judge."

Now with what justice can Dr. Woods, in the face of this statement, faithfully drawn from his own expressions, complain of my misrepresenting the orthodox faith on the subject of man's ability in the state of nature? Can he assert, *that man is by nature capable of having a good thought, or affection, or inclination, without an influence of the spirit, which he can do nothing to obtain, and which, when it is given, he cannot resist?*

But besides this, there is an Instrument, which Dr. Woods has occasion to subscribe once in five years. As it was drawn up within a few years for a very important purpose, and by men who cannot be suspected of willingly investing orthodoxy with false colours, in order to render it odious, they may be supposed to have used great deliberation, and care, and accuracy, in the statement of its doctrines. As Dr. Woods has twice at least, if not three times, declared it to express his faith by solemnly setting his name to it; we may reasonably consider it as expressing what he sincerely believes; as much so, as any thing that he has himself published.

In that Instrument are contained the following passages:

"By nature every man is personally depraved, destitute of holiness, unlike and opposed to God, and previously to the renewing agency of the divine spirit, all his moral actions are adverse to the character and glory of God; *being morally incapable of recovering the image of his Creator*, which was lost in Adam, every man is justly exposed to eternal damnation; so that except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God . . . . . God, of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity elected some to everlasting life . . . . *no means whatever can change the heart of a sinner, and make it holy . . . . regeneration and sanctification are effects of the creating and renewing agency of the holy spirit.*

You will think it not a little singular that Dr. Woods should have so far forgotten himself, as to charge me so indignantly with misrepresenting the orthodox faith: when the very term, which he has marked, as one of the most offensive, is applied in precisely the same manner in the creed, which he has himself subscribed.

When Dr. Woods is ready to say, that an unregenerate man has the power to perform a good act or to have a good thought, in a moral sense, before being a subject of that influence of the spirit of God, which is expressed by orthodox writers by the several phrases, *imparting a new principle*, *infusing a new relish*, *giving a new disposition*, *new inclination*, *new heart*, *new nature*; that he can do any thing to procure this new heart &c. to be given him; that he can prevent its being given to him, whenever God sees fit to give it; or, when it is given, has the power so to resist its influence, as still to remain a sinner; then, upon the supposition that *his personal faith* is to be considered as the standard of orthodoxy, will he have a right to complain of the representation I have given of the orthodox faith, respecting the impotence of unregenerate man, and the irresistible grace of God in his regeneration; but the same complaint, as you have seen, is equally applicable with respect to the language used by the most respectable orthodox writers. No part of this will he say, while he recollects what he has said in his Letters to Unitarians on this subject, particularly in defence of the use of the words *irresistible*, *overpowering*, *invincible*, as applied to the divine influence in regeneration; especially while it is apparent, that in saying it he will virtually give up three, at least, of the principal points in the orthodox faith. Native depravity, for it is impossible that a nature wholly corrupt and tending only to sin, should produce holiness; personal

election, because it cannot be, that the purpose of God should be frustrated by the sinner's doing that, which, from eternity, God had determined that he never should do; and the divine influence, which, according to the scheme, is required in regeneration; since if it be admitted that *that* can be resisted, there will be no certainty, that the purpose of heaven will be accomplished. God may be utterly defeated, and his will effectually opposed.

I have been more minute, perhaps, than was necessary on this subject; but I have thought it might be useful to show very clearly and fully how little dependence can be placed upon the common charges brought against Unitarians by the orthodox, when even such men as Dr. Woods are willing to lend their names to give countenance to one so wholly groundless as that, which led to this examination.

The whole reasoning from p. 310 to 319, respecting the commencement of sin in Adam and his posterity is founded on the several following positions:

"That *sin* lies radically and essentially in a wrong state of the heart, or of moral affection,—that this state of mind is the sum and substance of sin, . . . that without this wrong affection or disposition of the mind no bodily action could be considered as sinful, . . . that an overt act of sin would never result from outward circumstances, were it not for that wrong state of moral feeling, ... as a personal individual character, the commencement of moral evil in any human being is an *ultimate fact;* i. e. his commencing his existence with a sinful nature, or the commencement of sin in him, cannot be accounted for. . . .

In another respect, it is to be accounted for.... Every man has a relation to Adam as the head of the human species.... All men are sinners in consequence of the sin of Adam ... God has constituted a connexion between the conduct of Adam and the character of his posterity."

Now you will perceive that the whole of this apparatus is resorted to for the purpose of accounting for the actual existence of sin in the world; sin, according to Dr. Woods' position, implying a previous sinful disposition, and holiness, a holy disposition; and nothing being more absurd than the supposition, that either a sinful or a holy disposition should produce affections or lead to acts of the opposite character. But the whole of this, (besides that there is, I think, a want of clearness in the statement,) as far as it is intelligible, is not satisfactory. Instead of accounting for the commencement of sin, in each individual, it is only removing the difficulty further back. It is still to be accounted for, that Adam, with a nature entirely holy, affections and dispositions morally right,

"Beginning existence in a state of moral purity,—disposed from the first to love and obey his Creator, and by the exercise of holiness for a time, having done something toward forming *a habit of holiness*, and by his experience of the pleasures of holiness, fortified in a good degree against all temptations to sin,"

It is still, I say, to be accounted for, that Adam, in these circumstances, sinned. In whatever manner the sin of Adam is accounted for, he being admitted to be previously holy, to have no sinful disposition, nothing but temptation operating on a

heart inclined only to love and obey God; in the same manner may the first sin of each individual of his posterity be accounted for, without the supposition of any natural disposition or propensity to sin, or deriving from him a corrupt nature. This was urged upon Dr. Woods in my Answer to his Reply. He has said nothing to remove the difficulty, which it presents against his system. He can say nothing to remove it, but by recurring, as the most rational and consistent Calvinists do, to the *immediate, efficient act of God.* This Dr. Woods does not choose to do. And this I suppose is one of the cases, in which he has chosen to leave his reasoning in "*the awkward condition in which it has been made to appear,*" rather than to say, what would indeed remove its awkwardness, but at the same time would express a sentiment, with which the orthodox in general must be exceedingly shocked. Thus to charge the sins of men directly upon God, as his immediate act, might be thought almost as impious and exceptionable, as it is to attribute to man that degree of power, with which the Arminian doctrine of moral liberty invests him.

It was the business of Dr. Woods, not merely to assert again and again and again, as he has done, *the moral agency of Adam;* but to show, upon the principles of orthodoxy, *how it was possible for Adam, with a nature entirely holy, to do any thing himself to change that nature, or, until it was changed, to commit a single sin;* when the main argument he had used to prove native depravity is, *that a single sin implies a previous sinful disposition;* and when he had em-

ployed elaborate reasoning to show, *that it is a manifest contradiction, and the greatest absurdity possible to suppose*, that he could thus change his nature, or until it was changed, could possibly commit a sin.

Nothing could be more to the purpose of my argument on this point, than much of what is said in this passage by Dr. Woods. For in whatever way Adam, with a holy nature, could "begin to have a sinful affection," in the same way could any one of his posterity, though he were equally holy by nature. "If he, [Adam,] as a moral agent, was so constituted, as to be *capable of different kinds of moral action, and moral affection, that is, good and bad;*" then any one of his posterity and every one of them may have been so constituted. If "*actually to be the subject of good and bad affections and actions, and to change from one to the other, was perfectly within the compass of his moral agency;*" holy and pure as he was by nature, the same must be within the compass of the moral agency of every descendant of Adam, though he were supposed to be as holy and pure by nature, as he was. If *external motives might*, as is asserted, *excite in Adam*, who had no corruption of nature, *sinful desires or volitions, or lead him to sinful actions*, they might produce the same effects in any of his posterity, without supposing them to have any corruption of nature.

As the question respecting freedom of will on the one hand and philosophical necessity on the other, has no necessary connexion with the great

points at issue between the Orthodox and Unitarians,—such as native depravity, personal election, atonement, and regeneration by the special efficacious influence of the spirit of God; I might pass over the whole discussion on this subject from p. 319 to 334, without prejudice to the cause; since, however the argument were supposed to turn, those points might be unaffected by the issue. But as I believe the doctrine of moral freedom, as opposed to philosophical necessity, as well as to the orthodox doctrine of personal election, to be true; and that Dr. Woods has said nothing to impair the force of the argument for its truth; I will, after referring you to what I have said in my Answer to his Reply, Letters V, VII, and IX, add the few following observations upon Dr. Woods' discussion of the subject in his Remarks.

To all that is said, (pp. 321, 322) to show that it is consistent with moral agency and moral freedom to act under the influence of reason and of affections, bad or good, I fully agree. But I am not ready to agree to the definition of moral freedom which follows p. 323.

That "it is freedom from that physical coercion or force, which either causes actions that are not voluntary, or prevents those, which the agent actually chooses to perform."

This is so far from being a correct and complete definition of *moral freedom*, that it makes no part of the definition. It is the definition of *natural* or *physical liberty*.

A man is in extreme distress or danger, and it is my duty, if it were in my power, to relieve him;

but I am fast bound in chains, and can stir neither hand nor foot. According to the above definition, I have no *moral freedom*, *am not a moral agent*. But if Dr. Woods will turn to some of his other definitions, he will find, that the *morality* lies not in the *external act*, but in the *disposition* and *will*. I may therefore have the *disposition* and *will* in perfection, and am accordingly a subject of all that is *moral* in the action, notwithstanding my physical restraint. Or I may, on the other hand, have the disposition and the will *not* to give the relief, though it were in my power, and thus may incur all the moral guilt that I could have incurred, had I been free from bodily restraint. So far from true is the assertion, "*that we always consider a man as deprived of moral agency by being under the influence of such physical force*," that we never consider it as impairing, in any degree, his moral agency or accountableness. He is not accountable for the external act, which he had not the power to perform; but *he is accountable for all that was moral in the act*, i. e. the disposition, the will, the intention. Will Dr. Woods say, (and yet he must say it to be consistent with himself,) that he, who attempted a robbery or murder, incurred not the guilt of robbery or murder, because he was prevented by physical restraint from accomplishing his purpose? or that he, on the other hand, who risked his life to save that of a fellow mortal, was entitled to none of the moral desert of the action, because he was withheld from the power of performing the deed?

As all the morality, according to Dr. Woods, lies in the disposition, temper, intention, will, and no part of it in the action itself, *all the freedom which has any relation to its morality must regard the disposition and will,* and not the external action itself. All that is moral in the agency of the man must also lie in this. A man may be a *moral agent* without the power of performing a single *physical act;* and, on the other hand, he may have the physical power of performing a great variety of actions, the best, and the worst, and yet be destitute of what constitutes a moral agent. That is, he may be an idiot or insane. Again, Dr. Woods says,

"It is a law of our nature, that a certain part of our bodily and mental actions should be under the control of the will. Now a *moral agent must be free from whatever would take away that control.*" That is, he must be thus free in order to his being a moral agent.

This is also incorrect. For according to this, he, who, with the intention of murder, should aim a deadly thrust at the heart of another,—if, at the moment, the stroke were arrested by a spasm, a paralytic shock, or any thing that deprived him of the power of voluntary motion, or of the direction of voluntary motion,—he must be absolved from all guilt. But the fact is, that moral agency, and moral freedom, have no relation whatever to the control, which the agent has over his bodily actions. He may be as complete a moral agent, and have as perfect moral freedom, without any such control, as with it; and be as justly answerable to conscience and to God. On the other hand, he may have this control, and yet not be a moral agent.

He who has not a limb that will obey his will, nor an organ of the body that he can control, whose hands and feet move at random, or in an opposite direction from that to which he would guide them; and whose tongue utters the words of ribaldry or blasphemy, when his heart dictates a prayer, or a prayer, when he meant to deride or blaspheme, may yet have all the attributes of a moral and accountable being; may have all that constitutes the proper *freedom* of such a being, and may possess a character eminently holy, or eminently sinful. But according to Dr. Woods, such a man has no moral freedom, is not a moral agent, is not accountable, and is incapable alike of sin and of holiness. On the other hand, the actions of an insane man may be under the entire control of his will, and yet he have no moral freedom, nor be a moral agent. Dr. Woods proceeds to another characteristic.

"The freedom essential to a moral agent implies, therefore, a *freedom from whatever would prevent his will from being influenced by his affections.*"

If by this he means, the particular affections existing and operating *at the time*, and which relate to *the particular action*, which is the subject of volition, it is doubtless true, and he might have spared himself the labour of displaying the absurdity of the opposite supposition. But this is not what he must have intended, if he meant it to be of any avail to his system. He must have meant, I think, *the affections* considered in the same sense in which he has before used them, as constituting a

permanent character, equivalent to the general disposition, inclination &c. In this sense it is not true; and indeed the very reverse of it is a most important truth. It is of the very essence of moral liberty, that *the will is not invariably and necessarily connected with the prevailing and characteristic disposition, and affections of the agent.* If it were so, the saint or good man having holy affections, a right disposition, *every* act of the will must be holy and right. He would be incapable of a single sinful volition, consequently incapable of a single sin; for by the scheme, whenever the will varied from the affections, he would cease to be a moral agent, and cease of course to be capable of moral good or evil. But this freedom from sin in the holiest men, Dr. Woods will strenuously deny. "Not an orthodox man in the world, he will say, believes it. What the orthodox affirm is, that they have *some holiness, with much remaining sin.*" p. 307. But he will say also, for he has said it again and again, that holiness implies a holy disposition, holy affections, as much as sinfulness implies a sinful disposition and affections; and sin or a sinful volition can no more flow from holy affections, than holiness or a holy volition can flow from sinful affections. If then, as the definition of moral agency, which I am now considering, states, it is essential to it that the will be influenced by the affections, and by the affections be meant, what I suppose is to be understood in all other cases, where it occurs, it inevitably follows, that one who has any true holiness, can never have a sinful voli-

tion. For whenever he has a volition that is in its nature sinful, he ceases to be a moral agent, ceases therefore to be capable of moral action, ceases then to be capable of either virtue or vice, and of course is no longer an accountable being.

That moral agency is affected, and may be entirely "destroyed by an essential disorder or derangement of the rational faculties," will not be denied. By delirium, or insanity, or idiocy, a man may cease altogether to be a moral and accountable being, and be equally incapable of sin or holiness: and yet in either case he may have the passions and affections in their full strength, the will influenced entirely by them, and the power of executing whatever he wills.

With these detections of the fallaciousness of the whole ground work of Dr. Woods' elaborate and subtil reasonings on the subject before us, it will be easy to expose the fallacy of all that follows.

The error of Dr. Woods' scheme, and of his reasoning upon it, lies, not in asserting the influence of motives upon the conduct of moral agents, which he seems to intimate to be the distinction between his scheme and that of moral freedom; nor in asserting, "that men never choose and act contrary to that, which is the prevailing affection of the heart *at the time*." That every moral action is performed under the influence of motives, and that it is always *as the prevailing affection of the heart at the time*, is as true on the supposition of Arminian liberty, as upon that of philosophical necessity, or calvinistic predestination. The question is still,

whether in the exercise of this prevailing affection, he is a free or a necessary agent. *It is the prevailing affection at the time.* It is not, (and here lies the fallacy of the whole reasoning of the several pages before us,) it is *not the general disposition,* and what he terms the *reigning affection of the heart,* but the *prevailing affection at the time,* that determines what the particular act shall be.

But it is constantly implied by our author, and indeed expressly asserted, and it is a necessary part of the system he advocates, that it *is the general disposition,* which must in all cases prevail. It is not any modification of external circumstances, that constitutes the prevailing motive; for "we yield to one or the other of two opposite external motives, just according to our *predominant inclinations or affections.*" This predominant inclination here must mean, that general one, which according to the scheme, constitutes a man holy or sinful; because he explains it by adding, *there may be a principle in every human mind, superior to all motives of this character. In every good man there is such a principle.* It is not any modification of the several appetites and passions, nor yet the power of reason, and knowledge of right and wrong, that decides the action. "Though alike in all these respects, they may be totally unlike as to moral principle, or *the reigning affections of the heart. We always do modify the influence of all other motives, by the grand motive, the reigning affection of the heart.*"

He means then, that a man *always* acts from the *reigning affection of the heart, the grand motive,*

which modifies the influence of all other motives, the one great governing motive. which constantly overcomes all minor motives and contrary to which *no choice of a moral nature ever did take place, or ever can.*"

This great governing motive, which modifies the influence of all other motives, this reigning affection of the heart, in wicked men, is *the nature with which they come into being,* the disposition and tendency with which they were created. In good men, it is *that holiness, which is communicated in regeneration,* by which the nature of the sinner is changed, and his taste, his disposition, his inclination is opposite to what it was before.

Now it follows from this, as I have shown before, that every act of a sinner, whatever be the substance of the act, and whatever the particular disposition or intention, which prevailed at the time, must be sinful. To this Dr. Woods will agree. But it follows also, that every act of a regenerate man, whatever be the substance of the act, and whatever particular affection, passion, or motive, prevailing at the time, led to it, is holy. And as the kindest and most amiable dispositions, and most benevolent actions of an unregenerate man are, according to Dr. Woods, sinful; I see not, upon the same principle, why the bad actions of regenerate men, performed under the occasional influence of the bad passions, their pride, cruelty, injustice, are not holy. If the corrupt unrenewed nature of the former, serves to vitiate all his good actions; the principle of holiness in the latter ought also to sanc-

tify his bad deeds; and in that case, the deep remorse of David for his delinquency in the case of Uriah and Bathsheba,—and the tears of Peter for having under a momentary impression of fear denied his Lord, were causeless, and might have been spared. If they were holy men, these were holy acts.

Such are clearly the consequences, which follow from the reasoning in the pages under consideration. Their inconsistency with opinions expressly asserted, and with the great principles of the orthodox scheme, is a circumstance with which I am not concerned. It is not for me to reconcile the parts of a system, which are hostile to each other; and still more at variance, as I am fully persuaded, with reason, experience, and scripture.

On p. 343 is a passage, which I am sorry to notice, but which must not be suffered to pass without stricture. I did indeed, as is there asserted, apologize for adopting a strain of levity, which I could hardly reconcile with my sense of propriety, though it was only to enable Dr. Woods to perceive the futility as well as injustice of the course, which he had allowed himself to pursue. It would have well become him to have met the *frankness,* which he is pleased to mention with honour, by an apology equally frank and honorable. I am not disappointed, that he has not done it; but *I am disappointed,* that he has been willing to call your attention again to the subject, by offering a defence, instead of an apology. I am disappointed, that in a sober review,

and with deliberate reflection on the subject, he is willing to repeat the assertion, that such, as he then stated, he believes to be the real consequences of the opinions, which I had advanced.

It has been my aim to abridge the discussion, which I have now brought to a close, and reduce it to as narrow a compass as possible, by omitting some things, which I had intended to notice, and confining myself to those, which had a more immediate bearing upon the main questions, or which were necessary for my vindication from unfounded charges. In the present publication, as in the preceding, it has been my endeavour to express my own opinions with clearness, and without reserve, and to treat those, which have been advanced in opposition to them, and the arguments with which they are defended, with fairness and decorum.

In the whole of this controversy I have not lost sight of the high responsibility, which he takes upon himself, who undertakes the public discussion of the most abstruse questions, and the most important doctrines of religion. Of that responsibility, and of the duties implied in it, I am reminded by the prayer, with which my opponent concludes his remarks, and in which I most devoutly unite with him,—" that whatever is erroneous in our views of religion may be corrected; that whatever has been wrong in our mode of conducting this controversy may be forgiven; and that what we have both written, may be made subservient to the cause of truth and love."

In the spirit which dictates that prayer, I have felt myself required to reexamine with care what I have written, under a deep impression of accountableness to God, to conscience, and to the christian community, for the fidelity, integrity, and christian charity, with which the whole has on my part been conducted; and for any wrong influence, which, whether intentionally or carelessly, I may have been the means of producing. The revision has been attended with this satisfaction, that, in the two publications which have preceded the present, only one instance occurs of a sentiment, which I am not willing to leave as the expression of my present deliberate opinion; either on account of any doubt of its truth, or apprehension of its practical influence.

The passage, to which I refer, is in the third Letter of the first series, on the 25th page. It is the following fragment of a sentence—"*and that even in the worst men good feelings and principles,*" *&c.* to the end of the sentence. That part of a sentence, I think it my duty to recal, not on account of its bearing in this controversy; for the evidence for neither of the great points at issue, is either strengthened or weakened by it; but because, in the sense, which my words most naturally convey to the reader, I believe it not to express the truth, and because I am apprehensive, that its practical influence, as far as it shall have any, will be such as I should deprecate. I readily admit also, the justice of the remarks, which it has drawn from my opponent. The rest of the sentence, and all that

is connected with it, I have seen no reason to alter; and what remains, contains all that affects the argument, which I was there pursuing.

The great articles of the Unitarian faith, I am satisfied, rest upon a foundation, that can never be shaken. The more they are contemplated, the dearer they are to my heart; and the more closely I have had occasion to examine the evidence upon which they stand, and the objections that have been urged against them, the more firmly am I persuaded of their truth and their importance. The oftener they are presented to view, and made the subject of public discussion, the better will they be understood, the more clearly will their evidence, their reasonableness, and their foundation in the word of God be perceived, and the sooner, I am confident, shall we witness their general prevalence. As foreign, therefore, as all my habits and all my feelings have been from religious controversy, I thank God for the opportunity, which this discussion has given me, of contributing what was in my power to so important an end, by the exposition and defence of some of the most important theological opinions, generally maintained by Unitarian christians. It has been no small satisfaction to me to know, that the argument on the other side has been so conducted, as to leave no room to doubt, that the orthodox objections have been stated in their full strength, and with every advantage of which they are capable. For in this, as in every case, the cause of truth, and its eventual triumph, is best promoted, by hav-

in g the arguments, by which it is supported, subjected to a thorough and severe examination.

It has given me pleasure also to notice the good temper and expression of kind feelings, with which the discussion has been conducted by my opponent, on the side of the orthodox faith. It is for the reader to judge, whether it has been met on my part with a spirit equally manifesting a love of truth and christian charity. In whatever degree this has been the case, it leads to the hope, that in the same degree the cause of truth, and holiness, and love will be promoted, and that those, who read, though they should not be brought nearer together in their articles of faith, will not, on the other hand, be separated wider asunder, in their feelings;—that whether they are able or not to arrive at a unity of faith, upon all points, which they deem important; they will make some approach toward that unity of spirit, in the bond of peace; which is a far more important and desirable object, and a more decisive mark of their christian character.

A

SERMON,

DELIVERED IN BOSTON, APRIL 14, 1819,

AT THE

ORDINATION

OF THE

REVEREND JOHN PIERPONT,

TO THE

PASTORAL CHARGE OF THE CHURCH IN HOLLIS STREET.

BY HENRY WARE, D. D.
Hollis Professor of Divinity in Harvard University.

Second Edition.

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SERMON.

2 CORINTHIANS v. 18.

And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.

We are met together, fellow christians, for the purpose of introducing a new laborer into the work of the christian ministry. Can any subject be more suitable for our meditation on such an occasion, than that, which is presented by the text, which I have now read? It offers to our consideration the nature and the value of the sacred office, by expressing what is its great design. It is the *ministry of reconciliation*, which is now to be committed to the candidate for ordination. "God, of whom are all things," says the apostle, "hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation."

I shall speak in this Discourse of the doctrine of reconciliation.

I. As to its origin and author.

II. As to its nature and design.

III. As to the agency of Jesus Christ, and the subordinate agency of his apostles and ministers in accomplishing the great purpose of God, in reconciling us to himself.

I observe then, in the first place, that all things are of God; that is, all that are the subject of the apostle's discourse in this place; all things relative to the great renovating scheme, according to which, as expressed in the preceding verse, "old things were passed away, and all things were become new;" and Jews and Gentiles were to be renewed, and reconciled to God.

All is of God. All as respects the origin of the scheme and its purpose; the time and the manner of its execution; the instruments to be employed in it; and the persons who were to take a part both in the principal and the subordinate offices to be sustained.

It was the kindness and good will of God, that shone forth in the light and the blessings of the gospel, was manifested in provisions for the deliverance of mankind from the slavery of sin and the condemnation of death, and has appeared bringing salvation, offering pardon to the penitent, and eternal life to the obedient.

In the scheme of the gospel, we see and confess the same hand, which we adore in the constitution of nature. The same wise contrivance, the same benevolent purpose, the same unrivalled and uncontrolled power appearing in that, as in this, we refer them to the same source; and in the blessings it communicates, in the mercy it reveals, and in the hopes it inspires, acknowledge *the God and Father of all.*

No inferior intelligence, no finite agent do we discover; but the infinite and supreme. Not the wisdom or purpose of man do we discern; but the favor of God. "God so loved the world, as to send his Son to redeem and save it." "Not that we loved God, but that he loved us."

Referring thus to God as its author, all things relative to the great scheme, which the gospel reveals, by which he is reconciling us to himself;

II. We are next to consider what is meant by this doctrine of reconciliation.

The idea of reconciliation implies previous enmity, or variance, or estrangement.

How we were enemies to God, and therefore in what our reconciliation to him must consist, the sacred writers have told us. Enemies we were to God by "wicked works;" by a course of disobedience and sin, departing from the rule of life, which he had given, having the mind darkened, and the will perverted, having lost the image of God, the true life of the soul, and become "dead in trespasses and sins." Thus dead, it was the purpose of the gospel to quicken us, and restore spiritual life; thus in darkness, to enlighten us with the knowledge of the truth; thus alienated from God, and enemies by wicked works, to reconcile us to God, by delivering us from the bondage of corruption, and to "present us holy, spotless, and irreproachable in his

sight," restoring in us the image of God, producing in us that intellectual and moral renovation, by which the subjects of it may be properly said to have become new men, new creatures, to be regenerated, born again; because born to a spiritual life, changed to a new moral condition, formed to a new character. And this whole effect is produced by light imparted to the mind, and motives addressed to the heart and conscience.

When this is accomplished, when these effects are produced, then is the work of reconciliation accomplished. Then man is again at peace with God, restored to his favor. His past sins are forgiven, for this change has not been produced, could not be produced, without repentance; and repentance including reformation—a return to obedience as well, as sorrow for sin, was under the former dispensation, and is under the present, and must be under any, the proper ground of forgiveness.

When it is said, then, that God has reconciled us to himself, we are to understand, that from a state of enmity, alienation, estrangement by sin, he has done what was necessary for the recovery of mankind to the temper and character of obedience, to the love and practice of virtue, to a moral resemblance of himself, and thus to fit them for being at peace and in friendship with

God, and the objects of his approbation and favor.

III. We now come to speak of the agency of Jesus Christ in effecting the great purposes of the Most High, in our reconciliation with God. "Who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ." While the mercy and good will of God is to be acknowledged as that, in which the purpose of our redemption and reconciliation originated; Jesus Christ was employed as the messenger, by whom the kind purpose of the Father was revealed, and the instrument or agent by which it was accomplished. This work of reconciliation was the end of his mission, the design of his ministry, the purpose of his life, preaching, and death. What but this was meant, when he was said to be the Saviour? What is the salvation of the gospel, but the reconciliation of man to God?—his restoration to the favor of heaven, by being first recovered to holiness and virtue, which alone can have the approbation and favor of God? Jesus Christ is our Redeemer. "We have redemption, the forgiveness of sins through his blood." This refers to the state into which we are brought by the gospel, that of deliverance from the dominion of error and guilt; a deliverance procured for us by Christ, as it was by the instructions and motives of his gospel, that the repentance and renovation of heart and life were produced,

which have the promise of pardon and the favor of God. That this is the true meaning of our redemption by Jesus Christ will be rendered probable by considering the literal sense of the term, and its use, as applied by the sacred writers to other cases.

Now to redeem literally means to relieve from forfeiture, or punishment, or captivity, by the payment of a price, which is called a ransom. Thus a ransom is paid for a captive or a slave, as the price of his deliverance, and restoration to liberty and to his friends; or for one, whose life is forfeited by some crime, as the condition on which the punishment is remitted. In each of these cases the term redemption is applied in its literal and proper sense.

But as the deliverance simply from slavery, or captivity, or punishment, is the principal thing, and the price paid as a ransom only a secondary consideration, though it constituted an essential part of the original idea of redemption, the term easily came to be used to denote the principal thing alone, where this accessory circumstance was wanting; and any kind of deliverance, by a very common change in the use of language, was called a redemption.

Accordingly, the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage is called a redemption. God is said on this account to be their Redeemer; to have redeemed them from

the house of bondage, and out of the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.*

But in what manner was this redemption executed, and what was the ransom paid as the price of their deliverance? Was any thing paid as an equivalent for their services, or as a consideration for which the Egyptians were to let them go? Let the sacred historians and prophets answer?† It was "by his greatness, his mighty power, his strong hand, with which wonders were wrought in Egypt, in the Red sea, and in the wilderness," by which he compelled the Egyptian monarch to let the people depart, protected them in their flight, and led them in safety to the promised land. He redeemed them, not by a ransom paid to their former oppressors, but by that train of divine interpositions equally wonderful and merciful, which accomplished their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. The term is applied again in a similar manner to the deliverance of that nation from the Babylonish captivity. It is applied also in many instances to the deliverance of individuals from danger, captivity, slavery, or any great calamity, or fear; and the propriety of the term is sufficiently vindicated, where something important is done, though nothing is paid, to procure the deliverance.

* See Ex. viii. 23. Ps. cxi. 9. Ps. lxxviii. 35. Deut. vii. 8. 1 Chron. xvii. 21.

† See Ex. vi. 6. Deut. ix. 26. 1 Chron. xvii. 21. Neh. i. 10.

When therefore we are said to have redemption by the blood of Christ, we have a meaning authorized by the use of the sacred writers themselves, without supposing it to have been a price paid to the great enemy of man, as the purchase of our release from his power; or as a price paid to God to satisfy the demands of justice, and furnish the grounds of pardon.

When by his miracles he proved himself to be a messenger, and a teacher from God, when by his instructions and his example he delivered us from ignorance, and the slavery of sin, and by bringing men to repentance, made them fit subjects for pardon; when he revealed a future life of just retribution, and by his death and resurrection, gave the highest confirmation of the doctrine of a resurrection; he was our redeemer, and ransom, and saviour, in a similar sense with that in which God was the redeemer of the Israelites of old in all the deliverances that he wrought for them; and he redeemed them by his blood in the same manner, as they were redeemed by the mighty power, and the strong arm of the God of Israel.

Similar remarks again may be made with respect to the atonement, which christians have received by him. "By whom we have now received the atonement." The atonement, which believers have thus received, is that reconciliation and peace with God, which is brought about

by the new creating power of the gospel, regenerating the world, forming it anew to holiness and good works, subduing the power of sin, destroying the works of the devil.

Keeping in mind what has before been said, and what the scriptures so constantly say, of the origin and source of all the benefits of the gospel; remembering that it is to God, even the Father, that we are to refer every blessing, and privilege, and hope of the gospel as well, as every gift of nature; we shall have no difficulty in satisfying ourselves as to the agency of Jesus Christ, and in what sense the same benefits are to be attributed to him. We shall certainly find no just ground for the charge, sometimes brought against the doctrine of the gospel by its enemies, and countenanced by opinions, incautiously expressed, at least, if not erroneously held, by its friends, that it represents God, as severe and unrelenting, exacting the full penalty of his violated law, not accepting the repentance of the sinner without a complete satisfaction made either by himself, or by a substitute in his stead. And that we are indebted for the pardon and hope of salvation revealed in the gospel, not to the free mercy of God, but to the kind interposition of Jesus Christ, suffering in our stead, paying the debt for us, and thus literally taking upon himself the punishment of our sins.

We do not find in the New Testament any

just ground for a charge so apparently inconsistent with the real character of the benevolent Father of the universe. On the contrary, we there find God represented as the fountain of all the mercy of the gospel, that all is of God, that whatever was done by Jesus Christ for our redemption, was by the appointment of God, in the execution of his purposes of mercy. "God first loved the world, and sent his Son to redeem and save it." Can it be necessary to urge and repeat a doctrine that stands forth so distinctly on every page of the gospel, as the original love and good will of our heavenly Father? For let it be recollected, that whenever the atonement or reconciliation made by Jesus Christ is mentioned, man is always the party, that is said to be reconciled. It is never God that is reconciled to man, but man to God. It is man also, and not God, that receives the atonement. This is distinctly stated in the only instance in which the term atonement is used in the New Testament (Rom. v. 11.) "By whom we have now received the atonement."

But, if the object of Christ's mission and the purpose of his death had been to make satisfaction to God for the sins of mankind, thus to render him placable, to do something that should dispose him to be merciful, or render it proper for him to pardon, must not the language of the New Testament, on this subject, have

been the reverse of that, which we find it? In that case would not the language of his reconciling God to man have been as familiar and occurred as frequently, as that of his reconciling man to God actually does? And would not the apostle, instead of speaking of our having received the atonement, have represented God as receiving it?

But what then, it may be asked, was done by Jesus Christ to make reconciliation? And what is meant, when it is said, God has reconciled us to himself by him? The answer is not difficult.

It was the enlightening and renovating influence of his instructions and his example. He reconciled man to God by the renewing and sanctifying power of his religion, by bringing men to repentance and newness of life, subduing in them the spirit of rebellion, forming them to virtue and holiness, and the temper of obedience, and thus by restoring in them the divine image, rendering them fit subjects for the divine favor and approbation. It can never be too strongly fixed in our minds, that the agency of Jesus Christ in our reconciliation with God consists not in a sacrifice of himself, which was to be accepted instead of our obedience, nor yet which was to render our obedience acceptable to God; but by raising men from the death of sin to a life of holiness, by renewing them after the image of God, by inducing them to present themselves

to God a living sacrifice, and that sacrifice declared to be itself, acceptable to God.

The doctrine of reconciliation or atonement, (for they are words that mean the same thing, and are the same word in the original language,) The doctrine of reconciliation, I say, by Jesus Christ, thus understood, as it is always thus expressed in the New Testament, is the great doctrine of the gospel. Whatever terms are used by the sacred writers, whether to express it, to enforce it, or in allusion to it; the same great design appears, that of restoring men to the favor of God, by effecting in them a change of character, from sin to holiness, from carnal to spiritual, from an earthly to a heavenly temper, from the love of the world to the love and obedience of God; preparatory to the approbation and favor of God in a future and permanent life.

Will it be said to be inconsistent with these views of the subject, that we are represented to be "reconciled by the death of Christ," and "to have redemption by his blood?"

A satisfactory account, I think, may be given of this manner of speaking of the death and blood of Christ, consistently with the views now given of the doctrine of atonement, redemption and reconciliation. We know it is the manner of the sacred writers to make use of strong and emphatic terms: to employ, for the purpose of

impression, the language of passion and affection: to seize on a single circumstance which is striking and affecting, and to mention that as if it were the only one, when in fact it is only one of several, selected from the others only because the best calculated to make a deep impression. Now as the voluntary death of Christ was the most affecting circumstance, it alone is mentioned as if it were the only one.

The death of Christ, or his blood, produces its beneficial effects, and procures for us pardon and life in the same manner, as do his life, preaching, and example;—by its influence in producing that repentance and reformation, which have the promise of pardon, and in leading to a life of holy obedience, the proper qualification for the divine acceptance. Its known efficacy consists in delivering the sinner from the punishment of his sins, by operating as one of the powerful means and motives for delivering him from their dominion; by bringing him first to repentance and virtue, so as to make him a fit subject for pardon; by changing his heart, principles, affections and habits, producing in him the new birth, making him a new man, bringing him to the temper and character of the children of God.

But we shall doubtless mistake, if we imagine that our redemption or reconciliation is effected by the death of our Saviour alone, or by any sin-

gle act, or even by the whole of his personal actions and sufferings together.

The direct influence of our Saviour's personal ministry was limited to those, who were the immediate subjects of it. But we are not authorized thus to limit its benefits. Those are redeemed, and reconciled, and saved by his doctrine, on whose hearts and lives his religion has produced its sanctifying effects, through the instrumentality of any of those means, which it employs. For the work of reconciliation, which was begun by the personal ministry of Jesus Christ himself, was carried on and completed under him, as head over all things to the church, by the ministry of his apostles, and their successors in all succeeding ages. The work descended from the principal to subordinate agents. As expressed by the apostle in our text, "God hath given to *us* the ministry of reconciliation."

The great end of the gospel, the redemption and salvation of men, is effected by means of the whole system of christian institutions. All of them are to cooperate in the same great and benevolent design. In the moral as in the natural government of the world, God accomplishes his purposes, not by a direct act, nor by a single instrument, but by a great variety of means. Thus, after the personal ministry of Christ and his apostles ceased, the work was to proceed by

other means, and other instruments were to be employed. The christian scriptures were to be published; preachers were to be sent forth to proclaim the gospel to all nations; an order of men was to be set apart from the ordinary pursuits of life, to be devoted to the business of instructing men in the knowledge of christianity, to teach them its duties, and to urge upon them its motives. A weekly sabbath was to be appointed for the purpose of calling the attention of men statedly at suitable intervals, from the business and interests of the world, to their spiritual concerns, and immortal interests. The peculiar ordinances of the gospel were also to contribute to the same important end; one of them, *baptism*, by reminding christians, by the very form of the rite itself, of the obligation of purity, and of cultivating that holiness, which alone can give the answer of a good conscience; and the other, the *supper*, by inviting them, in a commemoration of the Saviour, to a frequent contemplation of his character and example in a manner calculated to lead them to imitation. Thus the great work of reconciling men to God, begun by Jesus Christ himself, was not finished by his apostles. Their successors entered upon their labors. It is still going on in all succeeding ages by the various instruments and means, which our holy religion has put in ope-

ration. It is promoted by every successful effort for giving the knowledge of the gospel, with all its renovating influence to the heathen, or for increasing the efficacy of its institutions in christian countries. It is promoted by every well directed endeavour to encourage virtue and to discountenance vice; to give weight and authority to correct principles; to give a right direction to the education of the young; to connect useful knowledge with piety and a sense of duty; and to make advancement in learning contribute to a correspondent advancement in christian faith and practical religion. By all these instruments and means is God constantly in all ages carrying on his work, and these are the sanctifying influences and new creating power of the Holy Spirit, by which it operates in delivering men from the power of satan, and transferring them into the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Especially are the great ends of the gospel accomplished by the institution of the christian ministry. As Christ was the messenger of God, by whom he was "reconciling the world to himself;" so the ministers of his religion are *his* ambassadors, to act for him, and to pray men "in his stead, to be reconciled to God." As he was sent into the world by the Father to be the Light of the world, and the Saviour of men; so they are sent into the world by *him*, to carry on

under him and for him, to its completion, the great purpose of the divine benevolence in his mission. That purpose, we have seen, was "to reconcile men to God." This then is the work, to which they are appointed; the duty, to which every other duty is subordinate. In this work they are to labor with an unceasing diligence and an upright zeal, and with that deep interest which is felt by him, who sees the best hopes and everlasting destiny of immortal beings depending. And in as far as they are faithful and successful in accomplishing this great purpose of their ministry, they are doing the work of God; they are workers together in accomplishing his purposes; and the effects, which they are the instruments in producing, are the proper fruits of the Spirit of God.

In the view which has now been taken of the christian doctrine of reconciliation, its connexion with the appointment of the christian ministry, and the place it holds in the duties of the sacred office, the candidate for ordination must feel a peculiar interest, connected as it is with the course of duty upon which he is now entering.

I know, my dear Sir, how overwhelming to the mind are the thoughts that crowd upon it on an occasion like the present. But if, as I am confident is your case, the duty on which

you are entering is your choice and your delight, and you engage in it with a full and distinct view of its nature, extent, and solemn obligation; with a seriousness and deep piety becoming the sacred character in which you are to appear, and with firm resolution to acquit yourself with fidelity to him, whose ambassador you are, and to those, to whom you come from him with the messages of peace and reconciliation; your cares, and labors, and solicitudes, however pressing they may be, will be rendered light, by the inward satisfaction, the pleasant anticipations, and the cheerful hopes, with which they are accompanied. For you will have constantly before you, to stimulate, to encourage, and to console you, the unspeakable value of the end, toward which all your exertions are directed. And if you can see that end in any good measure accomplished; if you can witness within the sphere of your influence any sensible improvement in the religious character or moral condition of men, which may reasonably be attributed, in whole or in part, to your exertions and those of your fellow laborers in the same cause; any more of the meek, and pure, and humble, and gentle spirit of the gospel reigning in the hearts of men and manifested in their lives, than might have been otherwise expected; any more of peace, and order, and union, and

charity in the church, and in all the intercourse of christians, and all the business of life; you will have the satisfaction of believing, that your labor is not wholly in vain; that the blessing of Him, who has appointed your duty, has also attended the performance of it.

To his benediction, we now devoutly commend you. May he, who has made it your favored lot, to have the scene of your labors and future usefulness cast in so pleasant a place, and to commence under such auspicious circumstances, be ever with you to guide, to support, to bless you, and to make your labors successful. May the reward of your fidelity be the satisfaction of seeing the children of those, who have called you to their service, and who take so lively an interest in the event of this day, formed to wisdom, and virtue, and glory under your ministry. May it be farther your joy to see our holy religion better understood and better practised all around you, especially to be one of the favored instruments of providence in restoring, as far as it has been lost or corrupted, and of preserving, so far as it remains unimpaired, the purity of the faith, which was once delivered to the saints; that faith, which Jesus taught, and for which his apostles labored, and suffered, and gave up every earthly hope. May you be animated by a spirit like theirs, and

without having to encounter the same trials, may you also resemble them in the success of your ministry, in the present comforts and everlasting rewards of those, who, shining as lights in the world, are instrumental in turning many to righteousness.

To the church and religious society, by which we are called to these offices of christian fellowship, we offer the congratulations of this interesting occasion. To you, indeed, my christian brethren, who were called to resign to higher public claims, a pastor, to whose powerful eloquence you were accustomed to listen with admiration and delight, and who, by his pastoral labors, had taken so deep hold in your affection and esteem, it must be an unexpected blessing to find yourselves able, at so early a period, to unite again so cordially in the choice of a successor. While our best wishes and prayers for the success, and usefulness, and happiness of your late pastor, accompany him to the new situation, and new sphere of duty, to which providence has transferred him, we rejoice with you, and unite in the fervent tribute of gratitude to God, that the breach is so soon, and so happily repaired; that God is thus visiting you with his smiles; that he has scarcely allowed you to feel your loss, and has prepared, as we trust, blessings for you for a long time to come.

The pastor, whom you have chosen, is now to be separated to the work, to which you have invited him. He comes with the messages of peace and reconciliation from the Great Head of the church. Let him not plead in vain, when he shall pray you, in Christ's stead, to be "reconciled to God." He comes to give his affections, his time, and his strength to the duties of the holy office, to which you have called him. But unless your minds and your hearts concur with his, of what avail will be his most faithful labors? On your cooperation must he still depend for satisfaction and for success. What, though he shall with deep investigation and profound reasoning, unfold to you the grand scheme of the gospel, in all its wonderful and mysterious provisions, explain to you its doctrines, and with persuasive eloquence inculcate its spirit, enforce its duties and offer its consolations; on you must it still depend, whether at the close of his ministry he shall have occasion in the desponding language of a prophet of old to exclaim (Is. xlix. 4) "I have labored in vain and spent my strength for nought;" or in the exulting strains of an apostle, to say, "ye are our glory, and joy, and crown of rejoicing." That *this* and not the *other* may be your case, and that of your pastor on that day, may God of his mercy grant; and that, by his faithful min-

istry, and your cheerful cooperation to render it effectual, the happy influences of the transactions of this day, not confined to the present actors and witnesses, may extend to your descendants through future generations, and both to yourselves and them, through an endless being.

A

SERMON,

DELIVERED IN KING'S CHAPEL, BOSTON,

9 JULY, 1826;

BEING THE NEXT LORD'S DAY AFTER THE DEATH

OF

JOHN ADAMS,

LATE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

BY HENRY WARE, D. D.

HOLLIS PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY IN HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

CAMBRIDGE.

PRINTED BY HILLIARD AND METCALF.

1826.

SERMON.

LUKE ii. 29, 30.

Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace,——for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.

This was said by a venerable Jewish saint, whose life had been prolonged to a great age, and who was now permitted to witness an event, which had long engaged the ardent desire and devout expectation of good men of his nation. He was now present at the temple at the presentation of the infant Saviour. In the circumstances and tokens of the occasion, he perceived that the fulfilment of the ancient promises was about to take place; and the bright hopes to be realized, which were built upon them. The consolation of Israel, for which he had long waited, now appeared; and in the infant of Bethlehem, he saw revealed the Deliverer, the Saviour, the Christ; whose advent had been portrayed in prophetic vision, and to

those who were looking for redemption in Israel, was the subject of devout and fervent prayer. The highest wishes, the last hope, of this holy man were now completed. No further desire remained to be fulfilled. "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace,——for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

There are other occasions and other circumstances, and they are many, in which it becomes a good man, after having filled up the measure of his days, and fulfilled the purposes of his earthly being, to welcome the approach of its termination, and the period of his departure.

He has, by the supposition, passed a life of virtue; not perfect or free from fault or defect, but sincere, and only shaded by the imperfections and blemishes which belong to a finite nature. He has no cause of terror or uneasiness then as he approaches the termination of his course. That conscience, which he has made his guide through life, will now be his support. Those principles which kept him from sin, will now save him from fear. Conscious of a faithful endeavour, though feeble and imperfect in the execution of the purpose, to approve himself to the author of his being by obeying the laws of his nature, and answering

to the condition of his being, and its duties, he feels no terror in the thought of appearing in his presence ; and can cheerfully submit himself to his judgment, and await the decision, that is to fix his condition hereafter. He can have no fearful apprehensions of falling into His hands, who has already been so kind to him and done so much for him, and whose favour and approbation it has, in return, always been the object nearest his heart to secure.

But it is not a single part of character or class of duties, that will give this peace of conscience and tranquil mind, in contemplating the end of this mortal scene. He has been faithful to a degree, that he can recollect with some satisfaction, in improving the gifts of heaven, in forming his own character, in the discipline of the faculties and affections. He has manifested his sense of the value of the most precious gifts of Heaven, by his care to employ them to the purposes for which they were designed, and that their value should be constantly increased in his possession. He has no fear therefore of the rebuke of the slothful servant, who suffered the talent intrusted to him to remain in his hand unused, till called to account for the use, to which he had applied it.

But the power of improving his faculties, and advancing to higher degress of perfection, is limited. And the time also cannot be prolonged beyond certain bounds, during which the faculties may be strengthened, or enlarged, or new and higher acquisitions can be made. And when this period has arrived, one of the great purposes of living is fully accomplished. But another purpose, closely connected with this, may yet long continue, that of employing the faculties thus improved, and applying the acquisitions which have been brought together, to the great purposes, for which they were designed; so that neither the interest nor the usefulness of life needs yet to be materially impaired; and although that piety, which cheerfully refers all to the appointment and disposal of unerring wisdom, will be ready to acquiesce without murmuring, it is not required to cease from the wish, the prayer, and the earnest endeavour to prolong still the scene of its labour, its usefulness, and its enjoyment of the lot assigned to it.

But there is a time, when the power of usefulness and of enjoyment, as well as that of improvement and of acquisition, must begin to fail, and at length cease altogether. And when this takes place, the interest in life, and in all that makes

life valuable, must be diminished, and the desirableness of its continuance must cease. Then, without indulging in querulous reflections on the vanity or the miseries of life, or in ungrateful expressions of dissatisfaction at the appointment of Heaven in this condition of our mortal nature, he may be allowed, in the spirit of humble and pious resignation, to express with earnestness the wish in the text—"Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace." It will consist with the best notions we have of a conformity of disposition and will to the government of the Supreme Being.

There may be circumstances of various kinds, incident to age, and accompanying the decline of life, to add to its weariness, and to reconcile one to its termination, if not to make its termination actually desirable. There may be circumstances of adversity, that shall render life a burden, long before that period has arrived, when there is a necessary termination of the power of action, of improvement, of enjoyment, and of usefulness. Affliction or disappointment may spread a gloom over the prospects of life. Sickness and pain may waste and exhaust the powers of nature. Domestic or public calamities may shed a withering influence, and make all that is about him, and all

that is before him dreary and hopeless. In extreme age, without any of these accidental circumstances to render existence comfortless, hopeless, and undesirable, there can hardly remain a wish for it to be further prolonged, on account of other circumstances incident to that period. There is no more the charm of novelty to give animation and interest to the scene. The ends of living have been fully answered, and the great account of life has been brought to a close. The companions of former days are all gone, or are become so few, and so thinly scattered abroad, that the connexion, to all the purposes of sympathy and social intercourse, is dissolved. He finds himself a solitary being, surrounded by men of another generation, of other feelings and habits, with other modes of thinking and acting, differing from those to which he has been accustomed, and to which his opinions and his taste have been assimilated.

He has answered all the ends of living, as respects himself. No further attainments are to be made, no further improvement of the faculties. Any changes that shall take place within him must be to a less elevated or less perfect standard. The most that can be hoped in old age is, to retain the acquisitions already made, not to add to them ;

and to preserve the faculties in their present vigor, not to increase their power. And he that can feel assured, that they are not yet impaired, that they are still capable of all that distinguished their best days, has enough to give him all the satisfaction, of which the decline of life is capable—enough to more than reconcile him to the continuance of a life, protracted beyond the limits usually allowed to mortals.

He has answered all the ends of living, as respects his family, and all those with whom he is intimately associated, or who are dependent upon him. The dependence of a family upon the head of it, is one of the most important and useful appointments in the economy of providence. It makes one of the strongest ties, that bind together the parts of society, which it is essential to its wellbeing, should be closely united. But it is also an important consideration, that its necessity and use are only of a limited duration. In the usual course of things, they cease before the arrival of extreme age ; and seldom does it happen, that he who has passed the age, to which the power of activity and usefulness is limited, has still unanswered claims upon his labour, his counsels, or his direction ; so as to bind him strongly

to earth, after the time has come, when that power no longer exists, and when the feelings that should prompt to its exertion are also become languid.

He has answered also the ends of living for the public. He that devotes his life to the service of mankind, in whatever station, and by whatever labour it may be, has in the common course of things, as in all other labours and duties of life, a certain appointed time, within which the service is to be performed, and beyond which, the opportunity for its performance cannot be prolonged. The good man, who has faithfully performed this service in its season, has answered the claims of society, and the calls of duty, and so far the ends of living. When he has passed the years usually allotted to the service of the public, he will find that the same services are not further needed from him. Another generation of men is raised up by providence to take his place, and that of his contemporaries, to perform the same services for the children, that he has performed for the fathers. Though the power of usefulness, therefore, may be prolonged, and even in its undiminished vigor, its value and importance to the community are not the same. The place which he filled is now ready

to be filled by others; the offices, the trusts, the labours, for which the community were accustomed to look to him, others, who have sprung up after him, are now equally qualified to sustain.

But usually something more than this may be said. Not only has Heaven provided other actors for the stage of public usefulness, and to take charge of the interests of the community, so that affairs may be expected to go on safely and prosperously without him; it will commonly happen, that the new generation of men, educated and destined to the service of the community, entering on the career of public usefulness, in the early maturity of their powers, will be better qualified to act and to serve the public in the new state of things, which the lapse of one generation must produce; than those, who have brought with them all the feelings, the opinions, and the prejudices, together with the manners and habits of another age. Just and enlarged views, therefore, will reconcile him, who has devoted his life to the public service, to the necessity, when he has "accomplished as an hireling his day," of giving up the field to others. Nor will he cherish this sentiment only as a sacrifice to necessity,—submission to a decree that is inevitable. A more elevated

and a purer and more generous sentiment will accompany it. The same patriotic and disinterested spirit, which led him to devote himself to the public good, and to regard the power and the opportunity of promoting that good as the highest privilege and happiness of his life, will lead him to rejoice in the public prosperity, by whomsoever it may be promoted. It will lead him to admire and to adore the all-providing care of Heaven, to see that the public interests will not suffer, when he and his contemporaries shall cease to have the management of them; to be assured that when he and they shall slumber in the dust, others as wise and as faithful will be raised up to stand in their places; and that Heaven will never suffer a failure in the accomplishment of any of its great and benevolent purposes, for want of having raised up instruments adequate to the occasion.

Of the great and the good men who are successively terminating their earthly course, and whom the great leveller of all distinctions, is bringing down one after another to the common dust, few can have juster cause, in the spirit of the text, to greet his approach, and bid welcome to the time and the manner, in which the great Disposer of events has ordered the close of his

mortal being, than the eminently distinguished man,* in whose recent death the whole community of our country feels a deep and affecting interest. But solemn as is this event, and full of instruction and deep impression, it is one, which all,—those even by whom he was most venerated and loved, may contemplate with a sentiment of unmingled satisfaction and gratitude. The eminently great and good man, of whom we speak, had many reasons, in common with all those whose life is protracted to the very extreme of old age, to be fully satisfied with life, and to welcome its termination. But there were also some circumstances peculiar to his own eventful history, to make the particular time, at which the great Arbiter of events saw fit to remove him from this mortal scene, the most desirable that could have been chosen for himself, and the most affecting and full of instruction to us.

The God of nature had formed him, for the scene of action to which he was appointed, by a singularly happy adaptation, in his physical, intellectual, and moral powers, to the various, and arduous, and difficult stations, in which he was destined to move, and to the great events, which

* See Note A, at the end.

he was to be one of the principal agents in bringing about. And it was his lot to enter upon the stage of active life at a period when there was a demand for all the power of his eloquence, and for all the energy and decision of character, for which he was distinguished. He early devoted himself to the service of his country, and was one of those intrepid and daring spirits, who first raised the voice of resistance to encroachments upon her rights, and was ready to step forward in her cause, when all was danger, and darkness, and difficulty; and when minds less ardent and less firm shrunk from the conflict.

I need not mention, what is so well known to all, the several most important public duties to which he was called, and all of which he discharged with honour to himself, with usefulness to his country, and with eminent service to the great cause to which his life was devoted, that of its liberties, its independence, and its prosperity. I need not speak of the influence produced by the energy of his character, and the power of his eloquence, in that assembly of great men, who dared to assert, to declare, and to maintain the independence of our country. I need not remind you of the ability and success with which he con-

ducted those negotiations, by which sympathy and aid in foreign countries was procured, which contributed so much to revive the spirits of the country, and support its cause, in the season of its deepest distress and discouragement; and without which, it seemed hardly possible, that the struggle should have come to a prosperous issue. I need not repeat to you, what is so well known and universally acknowledged, the skill and the power of his agency in the treaty, that established the independence of the country, and restored its peace, after the exhausting and desolating war of the Revolution; and how much the country is indebted to his inflexible firmness, decision, and courage, for some provisions in that instrument of the most vital interest. Nor need I follow the course of his public services abroad and at home afterwards, singly and constantly directed to the great purpose of perfecting the work, that had been begun, and so far carried on successfully; to make that independence a blessing to the country, which had cost it so much of labour, and suffering, and blood, and had been so happily achieved; to perfect its civil and political institutions, to secure their permanence, and to give a fair opportunity for the great experiment, the first

that had ever been attempted, of a purely popular representative government, founded on the equal rights of all.

For my object is neither history nor eulogy. It is only to trace some of the footsteps of Providence in the course of events, to revive the recollection of the great purposes so interesting to us, which were brought about by the agency of a set of men, the last of whom are now fast passing away; but who have left behind them for the admiration, the gratitude, and the imitation of future generations, imperishable memorials of greatness, and of public virtues and public services which were never in any country, or any age, surpassed. It is also to direct your minds and my own, to the conduct of providence toward some, and especially one of these, its favoured instruments, for the accomplishment of its great and benevolent purposes. It was the lot of some of them, the most gifted, and the most distinguished, long to enjoy the gratitude and the confidence of the country, which they had done so much to save; and having proved the faithful and successful instruments of Providence in effecting one part of its great designs, to be again and again entrusted by Providence and their fellow citizens in the ex-

ecution of others, which were to complete and to perfect the whole. The truly great and venerable man, who has just terminated a life, prolonged far beyond the limits usually allowed to mortals, and whose departure is the occasion of our falling into these reflections, when he put his hand to that immortal instrument which declared the independence of his country, in the clear foresight of the dangers and difficulties through which it was to be won, and the treasures, and the distresses, and the blood, which it must cost, ere it could be firmly established,*—what an ample reward for all his exertions, and his sacrifices would he then have thought it, to know that he should live to see the acknowledgment by the parent country, of that independence, of the declaration of which he had been one of the most strenuous and able advocates; and to witness the happy termination of the long and anxious conflict, which was required to establish it! And when he had been permitted to see this, and to see the country, which he regarded with a paternal affection and interest, after that glorious event, recovering the strength, which had been exhausted in the long and arduous contest; rising gradually to a more prosperous and happy state, and at length

* See Note B, at the end.

adopting a constitution of government, which promised permanence to its freedom and independence, and security and perpetuity to the blessings it had purchased; the highest hopes, which he had dared to indulge, must have been fully realized, and the end to which his life had been devoted, fully accomplished. This also was granted him. But Providence had still other rewards in store for those, who had been its most active and faithful agents in the days of labour, and peril, and severe trial. The gratitude and the confidence of the nation, which had been earned in the struggles and amidst the calamities of war, were not forgotten in peace and returning prosperity, and they were expressed by raising to the first offices in the government, those to whom the people believed themselves the most indebted, for having a country to be governed. What more than this had patriotism, or benevolence, or even personal ambition to hope for? The freedom and prosperity of their country, and their country thus expressing its gratitude for their exertions and services! Yet more still is granted by a kind Providence.—Life is still prolonged, and not prolonged in vain. It is to enable the venerable patriot to see in reality, and far beyond what could have been foreseen, the happy result of that great and decisive act, which

constituted the birth of a nation, and which required, at the time, the resolution of a hero, and the self-devotion of a martyr. It was to see the progress and to witness the success of the great experiment in human government. It was to be the happy spectator of an unexampled rapidity of improvement, a constantly and regularly increasing public prosperity, a complete and satisfactory trial of the strength and permanence of the political institutions of the country, and the dissolution of those parties, which for a long time afflicted and endangered the state, and excited fears for its safety.

And with all these experiences of the smiles of Heaven upon the land of his affections, and participation in its prosperity for half a century, and visions of the future, which recollections of the past could hardly fail to excite,—what more was to be hoped for in life, and what was to be wished for in the circumstances of death, but that it should be closely associated with the most interesting act of life,—and that the return of the day, which gave birth to a nation and independence to his country, should be that, which was to release him from the burdens of mortality, and introduce him to a rest and peace and glory, which shall not bear a remote resemblance to that, which it was

the object of that act to procure for his country? And this, the last thing that fond nature could wish,—and more than piety could dare with confidence to ask, is granted.

* [A coincidence so remarkable, though it stood alone, should not be overlooked. The reflecting man will think of it with a deep and solemn interest. He that is wise will observe these things. But it stands not alone; it is closely connected with another, not less remarkable, and each separately, and especially both together of so extraordinary a kind, that in nothing short of a sensible miracle, could the immediate hand of Heaven be more visible. The two illustrious men, one of them the author of that instrument, by which, on the 4th of July, 1776, we were declared to be an independent nation; the other his colleague for framing that instrument, and the principal agent, by the power of his eloquence, in procuring its adoption by Congress on that day, both living to witness the celebration of its fiftieth anniversary, and both then expiring within a few hours of that, at which that declaration was announced from the Hall of Congress! "Who knoweth not, in all these, that the

* The passage within brackets is altered, in accommodation to the event alluded to, the knowledge of which arrived the next day after the sermon was delivered.

hand of the Lord hath wrought this? In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind."

It is the part of piety, in occurrences so extraordinary, to see and acknowledge the hand of Heaven, intending by them to draw the attention, even of the thoughtless and careless, to the interests and the importance of the great occasion with which they are connected,—to the momentous act from which such vast consequences have followed, —to that providence of God, which so signally smiled upon the enterprise,—and to a just estimate of the services and the deserts of the two illustrious men, who were associated together in that act, —in so many important particulars resembling each other,—in the labours, the honours, and the fortunes of an uncommonly long life, spent, the whole of the active portion of it, in the service of their country in the highest trusts, and the remainder in honourable retirement, passed in useful pursuits, and in giving an example to their country worthy of imitation,—and at last associated together in a manner so extraordinary and so touching in the time and the circumstances of their death. It is the part of piety, I repeat, to open the mind to the instruction, which such events carry with them, and to yield the heart to the deep and solemn im-

pressions, which they are adapted to make. And what are the instructions, what the impressions, what the practical influences, to which piety, wisdom, and duty require us to yield ourselves?

One part of the design of Heaven will doubtless be accomplished, if we are led to a more serious thought of the providence of God in general in the government of the world, and the acknowledgement of it in the course of events.

Another purpose will be answered, if we are led to think more deeply upon the extensive and permanent influences of the great act, which now, at the interval of half a century, is connected so singularly in coincidence of time with the simultaneous death of the two most conspicuous agents in its performance.

Another end will be answered, if we are led to a juster view of our obligation to those great men, and others with whom they were associated, in effecting and bringing to a prosperous conclusion a revolution, in which we and all future generations have so deep an interest; if we are led to estimate more justly their sacrifices, their services, the motives upon which they acted, the principles upon which they proceeded,—the undaunted courage, with which they met the dangers of the enterprise,—the inflexible resolution, with which they

persevered in their purpose, in circumstances the most perplexing, and in seasons the most desperate.

And a still further and higher end will be answered, if our minds are carried up to the contemplation of the counsels of unerring wisdom, and the designs of infinite goodness, so discernible in the whole course of events, by which our country has been raised from its feeble infancy to greatness, strength, and prosperity. If we are led up through second causes to the great First Cause,—through that which is visible, to Him who is invisible, from that agency which we see and can comprehend, to that higher agency, without which, that which we see could not have existed ;—and to those higher counsels, far above our inquiries, by which that agency is directed.]

We are called, my hearers, by the subject and the occasion, to mingled emotions, and to reflections and duties of various character and import. It should remind us of that Providence, over the interests of individuals and the affairs of nations, which, when it has great and momentous purposes to effect, never fails to provide the instruments, that are suited to the occasion, and that are equal to its exigencies ; and we should learn how much it is our duty, in the darkest seasons of trial or of danger, to trust in that Providence.

We should receive a strong impression of the value and of the rewards of a faithful use of the gifts of Heaven, and faithful execution of its purposes, and a settled assurance, that inflexible rectitude, and persevering virtue, and adherence to principle,—however for a time they may be unperceived or misjudged by men,—will never be forgotten nor overlooked by Him, who sees all things, nor will lose their final reward.

We should finally be led to solemn reflections on that momentous event, which awaits all alike, and is to level all human distinctions; from which neither age, nor wisdom, nor rank, nor virtue furnishes any exemption. But although there is no exemption, and can be no escape, there is a preparation of unfailing efficacy and security,—a preparation which will disarm it of all its terrors. It is that of a good conscience. Let life be passed in virtuous activity, and there need be nothing to disturb the peace and serenity of its close. Be faithful unto death, and you may hope to receive a crown of life.

NOTES.

Note A.

The public estimation of the preeminent virtues and services of Mr. Adams, may be seen in the following preamble to a *Resolution*, which was unanimously adopted by the Convention which was assembled in November 1820, for the purpose of revising the Constitution of Massachusetts.

"Whereas the Honorable JOHN ADAMS, a member of this Convention, and elected the President thereof, has for more than half a century devoted the great powers of his mind, and his profound wisdom and learning to the service of his country and of mankind:

"In fearlessly vindicating the rights of the North American provinces against the usurpations and encroachments of the superintending government:

"In diffusing a knowledge of the principles of civil liberty among his fellow subjects, and exciting them to a firm and resolute defence of the privileges of freemen:

"In early conceiving, asserting, and maintaining the justice and practicability of establishing the independence of the United States of America:

"In giving the powerful aid of his political knowledge in the formation of the Constitution of this his native State, which Constitution became, in a great measure, the model of those which were subsequently formed:

"In conciliating the favour of foreign powers, and obtaining their countenance and support in the arduous struggle for independence:

"In negotiating the treaty of peace which secured forever the sovereignty of the United States, and in defeating all attempts to prevent it, and especially in preserving in that treaty the vital interests of the United States:

"In demonstrating to the world, in his Defence of the Constitutions of the several United States, the contested principle since admitted as an axiom, that checks and balances in legislative power are essential to true liberty:

"In devoting his time and talents to the service of the nation in the high and important trusts of Vice President and President of the United States:

"And lastly, in passing an honorable old age in dignified retirement, in the practice of all the domestic virtues, thus exhibiting to his countrymen and to posterity, an example of true greatness of mind and of genuine patriotism:

"Therefore *resolved*, that the members of this convention, representing the people of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, do joyfully avail themselves of this opportunity to testify their respect and gratitude to this eminent patriot and statesman, for the great services rendered by him to his country, and their high gratification that at this late period of life, he is permitted by Divine Providence to assist them with his counsel in revising the Constitution, which forty years ago his wisdom and prudence assisted to form."

Note B.

The following passages, extracted from two letters, written by Mr. Adams, on the 3d of July, 1776, being the day after the

Resolution of Independence was passed, and the day before the *Declaration* was signed and published, will show with what expectations, as to immediate consequences, he took the lead in that decisive measure.

"PHILADELPHIA, July 3, 1776.

"—Yesterday the greatest question was decided which was ever debated in America; and greater, perhaps, never was or will be decided among men. A resolution was passed without one dissenting colony—'That these United States are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states.'

"The day is passed; the 2d of July, 1776, will be a memorable epoch in the history of America. I am apt to believe it will be celebrated by succeeding generations, as the great Anniversary Festival. It ought to be commemorated as the *Day of Deliverance*, by solemn acts of devotion to Almighty God. It ought to be solemnized with pomp, shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations *from one end of the continent to the other*, from this time forward for ever! You will think me transported with enthusiasm; but I am not. I am well aware of the toil, and blood, and treasure, that it will cost, to maintain this declaration, and support and defend these States; yet through all the gloom, I can see the rays of light and glory —I can see that the end is worth more than all the means: and that posterity will triumph, although you and I may rue, which I hope we shall not.

"I am, &c. JOHN ADAMS."

The same expectation is expressed not less strongly in the following extract from a letter, written July 1st, the day preceding the adoption of the *Resolution*, and while the subject was in debate in Congress.

"If you imagine that I expect this declaration will ward off calamities from this country, you are mistaken. A bloody conflict we are destined to endure. This has been my opinion from the beginning. You will certainly remember my decided opinion was, at the first congress, when we found that we could not agree upon an immediate non-exportation, that the contest could not be settled without bloodshed, and that if hostilities should once commence, they would terminate in an incurable animosity between the two countries. Every political event since the 19th of April 1775, has confirmed me in this opinion.

"If you imagine that I flatter myself with happiness and halcyon days, after a separation from Great Britain, you are mistaken again. I don't expect that our new governments will be as quiet as I could wish, nor that happy harmony, confidence, and affection between the colonies, that every good American ought to study, labour, and pray for, for a long time. But freedom is a counterbalance for poverty, discord, and war, and more. It is your hard lot and mine to be called into life at such a time;—yet even these times have their pleasures."

In a letter to the Governor of Georgia on the same day, he writes: "The object is great which we have in view, and we must expect a great expense of blood to obtain it. But we should always remember that a free constitution of civil government cannot be purchased at too dear a rate, as there is nothing, on this side the New Jerusalem, of equal importance to mankind."

The day of the *Declaration*, and not that of the *Resolution*, as he then expected, has become that of the anniversary celebration.

A

SERMON,

DELIVERED JANUARY 17, 1821,

AT

THE ORDINATION

OF THE

REV. CHARLES BROOKS

TO THE

PASTORAL CHARGE

OF THE

THIRD CHURCH AND PARISH

IN HINGHAM.

BY HENRY WARE, D. D.
Prof. of Div. in Harvard University.

BOSTON:

PRINTED BY EZRA LINCOLN.

1821.

SERMON.

II. CHRONICLES, XVIII. 13.

"And Michaiah said, as the Lord liveth, even what my God saith, that will I speak."

WHAT I have now read to you, my hearers, was the reply of an honest and faithful prophet of the most High, when an attempt was made to persuade him to suit his message to the occasion, and to accommodate his answer from the Lord to the wishes of his royal master.

Not like the prophet of Moab, on a similar occasion, was he to be induced by proffers of the gains of unrighteousness to resort to evasions and try expedients, that he might pronounce an oracle gratifying to the passions, and favorable to the wishes of his employer. This fearless and conscientious prophet of the old covenant resembled more in his character the great apostle of the Gentiles under the new; who could appeal to his Ephesian converts, that in the discharge of his apostolic mission among them, "He had not shunned to declare unto them all the counsel of God."

The minister of the Gospel *now* is as truly, though not in precisely the same manner, a messenger of God,

as were the prophets of old, who were sent with special messages, and on particular errands; or the apostles and primitive preachers of Christianity.—It may be allowed then to apply the text to the present occasion, as indicating an important part of the character, which should be found in the Christian minister.

I shall accordingly confine myself in this discourse to some remarks on that particular part of the character of a minister of the Gospel.

I. I shall first speak of the boldness and honesty, which are indispensable to the faithful execution of his office as a messenger of God to men,

II. And secondly shall make some remarks on the limitations to which it is proper, that the spirit which we recommend should be subjected.

I. I am first to make some remarks on the boldness and honesty, which are indispensable to the faithful execution of the ministerial office.

I unite these together, not because they imply each other, or are invariably found together. Either of them may exist without the other. A minister may be bold and yet act with disguise—honest and yet timid. But there is a distinct trait of character formed by their union which is highly important to a minister of the Gospel.

This part of character might seem at first indeed to be less necessary to *him*, than to any other man. The religion which he teaches makes little account of active courage. Its encouragements and commendation are bestowed on meekness, forbearance, patient suffering, and a yielding spirit. Its teachers are withdrawn in a great measure from those interests of the world, and en-

gagements in society, which produce collision, and call for that activity and energy of character, which are requisite in other employments. They are besides required, in that intercourse which their office allows, to be exemplary for their humility and meekness; to be gentle to all men, not resisting the violent, but meekly instructing them, that oppose themselves; and employing no weapons either of aggression or of defence, but such as comport with its mild and peaceful spirit, and benevolent design. Thus situated, it might be imagined, that ministers of the Gospel would have little occasion for courage in the exercise of their office.

But, though the spirit they are always to display is meek, gentle, pacific; there may be circumstances, in which, to execute the duties of their office with fidelity will call for resolution, firmness, and energy of character.

The Christian minister is an ambassador of Christ, in his stead to persuade men to be reconciled to God. To this end he is to deliver to them without fear and without reserve, the whole scheme of doctrine and duty, which is revealed in the Gospel. He must not shun to declare the whole counsel of God, and be induced by no motive to keep back any thing, which would promote the great end of his ministry.

1. He must teach and enforce the purity and strictness of Christian morality. Not bend the rule or explain away the precept, or bring it down till it shall correspond with prevailing practice and the custom of the world. But will men bear to hear a doctrine inculcated, which is a constant reproach to their practices; duties enjoined as essential, which they uniformly neglect, and

a warning voice raised against vices, which they habitually practise, which they are disposed to justify, or at least to excuse or palliate, and which they are resolved not to renounce? Fidelity to his Master, will not allow him to shrink from the ungrateful task of exposing vice, however supported by authority, or sanctioned by custom; however rendered fashionable by the practice of the rich or the great, or by the multitude followed without thought, and without the consideration of its character, or its consequenees.—No consideration of tenderness for others, or of ease or safety to himself, will allow him to spare the voice of admonition or to restrain that of censure, at the call of duty.

Nor is it only to the direct inculcation of a system of morals more pure, and strict, and elevated, than the taste of the age will well bear, that the Christian preacher is called; and thus to render himself obnoxious to those, who wish for more indulgence, and a wider latitude. It becomes his duty to expose those false reasonings, by which vice is defended, and the tendency of opinions, perhaps honestly embraced, to practical consequences, which are not foreseen nor intended by those, who hold them. He must go further—not only correct the dangerous mistakes into which simplicity and honesty may have fallen, but lay open the subterfuges of hypocrisy. He must probe the conscience, go to the bottom of the heart, bring to light, and expose in its just shape and dimensions, the lurking depravity, that is there concealed; make known to the world and to themselves, the hollowness of their pretences, the falseness of their professions, the vanity of their reliances. He must show them how far their notions come

short of the purity and perfection, which the divine law requires; and how dangerous it is to rely on any thing as a substitute for integrity of heart and practical holiness and righteousness. He must take away all the false hopes and unauthorized dependence of the sinner, and show him, that his only well founded hope in the mercy of God, must be in that true repentance, faith, and obedience, to which the promises of mercy are made.

2. Besides those doctrines, which have an immediate reference to practice, there are other truths less immediate, but not less important in their influence on the whole temper and character of Christians. On many of these, through the imperfection of our faculties, and from various causes incident to imperfect and fallible beings, we are liable to error; our enquiries lead to various conclusions, and with equal fairness and diligence and intelligence, we entertain a diversity of opinion.—Now this imperfection of our knowledge, and consequent diversity of opinion, constitute an important part of that moral discipline under which we are here placed; and are designed at once to exercise our faculties, to prove our fidelity, to try our temper and disposition, and to give scope and opportunity for virtues, which otherwise would want a field for their display.

This imperfection of our knowledge on divine subjects, this obscurity and ambiguity which are spread over some truths, which God has not seen fit by revelation wholly to remove, but has left to exercise and prove our love of truth, and our mutual candour, forbearance, and patience; imposes on the Christian minister the obligation of expressing sometimes opinions, which he believes to be true and important, but which

he has reason to apprehend may be offensive; and on the other hand, to endeavour to refute other opinions, which are popular and prevalent, which he deems to be erroneous and of dangerous tendency. And this he may be called to do, at the expense of his reputation, with the certainty of incurring odium, with the danger of alienating his best friends, with the hazard of forfeiting his support, with the risk even of the entire loss of his usefulness. For though it be the duty of a minister of the Gospel to have constant respect to his usefulness, so as sometimes to make considerable sacrifices to it, there are those, which he is not allowed to make. It is never to come in competition with the truth. Let him hold fast his integrity and leave his character and usefulness to the care of Heaven. Let him adhere with firmness to the former, and he need not fear, that God will not provide for the latter.

Now it is easy to see how much of courage and resolution the Christian minister may have occasion to bring into exercise in the faithful discharge of his conscience. The licentious will hate the unyielding severity of a pure morality. Those that have made a compromise with conscience, and engaged their passions and wishes to help them to impose on their understanding, will not readily forgive the exposure of their hypocrisy, or the detection of the fallacies by which they have fortified themselves in error and vice. And many are bound fast in the fetters of prejudice. The speculative opinions they have imbibed by education they hold with undoubting confidence, and not only refuse to examine their grounds, or listen with patience to one who calls them in question, and teaches opinions, which

tend to overthrow them; but think it their duty to reject him unheard. Unlike the Bereans, who searched the scriptures diligently, to see whether the things they heard were so, and resembling more the Thessalonians, who persecuted and drove from their city the teachers of a new and unexamined doctrine.

In each of these cases may be perceived the value of that union of boldness with honesty in the messenger of heaven, which was displayed by the prophet in the text; the necessity of his possessing a spirit unmoved by fear as well as fortified with integrity, that he may be ready with him in every emergency to declare with firmness, "what my God saith, that will I speak."

A cunning messenger in such cases will temporize: and a timid one will palliate, will soften the rigor of the precept, relax a little of the strictness of the command, bend somewhat from the stiff and strait line, cast a little shade over the brightness of truth.—And each may be expected to practise somewhat of concealment and disguise;—be tempted to inquire—not what is true, but what will be acceptable, not what duty demands and the exigencies of mankind require, but what they will bear, what may be said with safety, what will be heard without offence. He will be strongly inclined to yield to the current and go down with the stream, rather than incur the labor and risk of an attempt to stem it, or to turn it aside into a right channel.

Nor is it only in the active duty of imparting the truths and counsels of religion that this trait of character will discover itself, or its want be felt. The same timidity which shrinks from the odium of propagating unwelcome doctrines, will also deter from that freedom

of inquiry, which may lead to the reception of unpopular opinions. He, whose solicitude to avoid reproach or escape censure, is stronger than his love of truth and sense of duty, will not wish to see,—certainly will not make great exertions to discover, what it will be dangerous for him to profess, when he shall have discovered it. He will hardly examine with fairness those opinions, which, if he should be led to embrace them, may cost him his reputation, may separate him from his friends, and blast his worldly prospects. It requires a conscience well regulated, united with some energy of character for one in such circumstances to say to himself, I will leave my character and interests to the care of heaven, and be only concerned to follow the light of truth and path of duty. Disregarding all personal consequences, I will have a single view to those, by which the prevalence of truth and the interests of religion and virtue will be affected.

II. But then I am to show in the second place that when this honest resolution has been adopted, a spirit imbibed, so firm, intrepid, unreserved, becoming the character of a messenger of God, whom nothing can intimidate, or seduce, or draw aside from a steady regard to truth and duty,—there are restrictions to which the exercise of this spirit is to be subjected; or, perhaps more properly, limitations to be observed, such as charity suggests, and wisdom and discretion prescribe.

Thus it is his duty to be unreserved and explicit in the declaration of his faith, to be undisguised in the expression of his opinions, to keep back and conceal nothing through fear of censure; yet in all this he is to

exercise discretion, he is to regard time, and place, and occasion. It is no part of honest boldness to obtrude his notions unseasonably, unnecessarily, or offensively. Still less can it be required of him to do it for the purpose of provoking controversy. To be forward to enter the list of theological warfare is a most equivocal proof of true apostolic zeal for the truth, and, in moral and religious estimate, there is perhaps less ground of preference than we may imagine, between him who takes the field with his antagonist to settle a point of honour; and him, who hastens with all the heat of party zeal into religious controversy, so as to increase in himself and excite in others the worst passions of the human heart—upon a subject, which of all others, might be expected in a good mind to be associated with meekness, forbearance, and charity.

In one's professions let there be perfect openness and unshrinking honesty. But nothing can be more distinct from this, than that ostentatious publicity, which would render his opinions offensive, and expose himself to odium.—Nor can it be requisite in the propagation of truth, as a test of zeal, or an evidence of fidelity in the cause, to render it offensive by a rash and premature exposure, before the way is prepared for its reception. It is wasting the good seed upon ground, that has not been first cleared and cultivated, laid open to the influence of heaven, and fitted to receive it.—It is a practical question, which the circumstances of each individual case must decide, whether the cause of truth will be better promoted and its success ensured by the cautious reserve of an Erasmus, or the vigorous and dauntless courage of a Luther; by the accommodating and (if I

may be allowed to use the expression in an innocent sense) temporizing course of a Watson and a Paley, or the open and disinterested zeal, and regardlessness of consequences, that distinguished a Lindsey, a Wakefield, and a Priestley.

Regard is also to be had to opinions, that are firmly established, and fondly cherished. These, however erroneous they may be supposed to be, are not to be handled rudely, or disrepectfully. If they are ever to be corrected, it must be by a slow and gradual process. New light, new views, and new impressions, must be introduced, in such measure and such connexion, as they can be borne. Not abruptly and at once, lest in the general shock of the mind in having the foundation of some of its opinions undermined the whole fabric of its faith should be overturned at once.—A poor account will that servant have to give of his fidelity to his master, who, in the zeal to serve him, by prematurely weeding out the tares from his field, in doing it destroys with them the good grain.

Discretion then is to be observed. Whether reproof is to be administered, instruction communicated, or error or vice encountered; reference to time, persons, and occasion is never to be neglected; not from personal considerations, but because the best purposes will otherwise be defeated, the best exertions in the cause of truth and virtue be rendered abortive, or perhaps mischievous, the purest views and intentions misunderstood and perverted, and that influence and power of promoting the best designs lost, which under the direction of prudence, and without any dishonest sacrifices of sincerity or candour, might have been highly useful in the

cause of truth and virtue, the progress of religion, and the good of mankind.

Let it then be well understood, that the messenger of God and herald of religious truth, though he is not to temporize, is to be discreet in avoiding needless offence, and sagacious in discovering, and faithful in seizing on proper occasions to express unwelcome truths; and is then to express them without reserve, but with modesty, decorum, and a spirit of deference and conciliation, which may serve to awaken attention and stimulate inquiry, without disturbing hostile prejudices, and exciting the violence of opposition.

He is not to be deterred from any avowal of opinions or expression of duty, by the fear of incurring odium, and arming ill will against *himself;* but he may very properly be restrained by a higher and more generous motive, the fear of losing his usefulness, of the failure of effect from the want of circumspection, of doing an important injury to the cause he has at heart by rashly and unnecessarily bringing ruin on himself.

He is to consider, that his reputation, and the power it may give him of enforcing truth and duty, and promoting the cause of his master, is a trust for which he is answerable. And that he cannot carelessly or wantonly sport it away, or obstinately sacrifice it to his pride or his passions, and be guiltless.

Again, in the discharge of the part of ministerial duty, which respects the censure of vice, and the testimony he is to bear against all wickedness; while he does it with unhesitating and fearless fidelity, he is carefully to distinguish between the deed and the person. While the one is condemned without reserve, a consciousness of

human imperfection will demand, and charity and justice require, that the other be judged with tenderness and lenity. The *sin* is to be represented in all its deformity, displayed in its odious features, and held up to view to be abhorred and avoided. But the *sinner* is to be tenderly dealt with by a fellow sinner. He is amenable at another tribunal; is to be tried at a higher court; is to be acquitted or condemned by *Him*, who takes cognizance of intentions as well as actions; who knows all the circumstances of the case, circumstances possibly of alleviation; of invincible weakness, or ignorance, or temptation, which may take the individual out of the case, or alter the nature, and character, and demerit of the case itself.—It is not for fallible man to judge his fellow man—to determine the degrees of his merit or depravity, to fix his place in the scale of virtue or vice. Possessing but scanty and imperfect means of knowing, it is arrogance and presumption in him to pronounce respecting his character, or condition. To Him only, who searcheth the heart is known the force of temptation, the power of resistance, that has been imparted, the degree in which that power has been exerted or neglected, the virtuous efforts, which though not effectual, have yet been put forth; circumstances, which, in the eye of Omniscience, make a wide difference between *some* cases, where no difference appears to us; and which may place *others* on a level, where to our imperfect view, there was a wide distinction of character and desert.—It is an awful responsibility, that he takes upon himself, who presumes to sit in judgment, to stand in the place of Omniscience, and pronounce the decisions, which belong only to Him, that searcheth the heart.

In this Discourse, my young friend, which I have delivered at your request, I have confined myself to the consideration of one topic of duty, and to a single trait of ministerial character. For a full view of your duty, and what you should aspire to be, you will look to no human master, to no imperfect teacher, but to that perfect directory of faith and practice, from which I have endeavoured to draw forth this imperfect sketch. But the few lines, which I have taken, may be of some importance; and yet I feel a satisfaction, in believing, that even these were not needed, either to give you views of duty, or principles or motives of conduct, to which you was before a stranger; nor to fortify your resolution, or to strengthen your inducement to imitate the faithful prophet, by making the word and command of God your sole guide.

You have chosen the sacred office, with which you are now to be invested; and you will enter upon its duties in this place in a full view, and with a deep impression of all the demands it will make upon your fidelity, and constancy, and zeal. And you will meet those demands with a prepared mind. To ascertain how that fidelity is to be expressed, and in what acts your constancy and zeal are to be tried and proved, you will consult only the word of God, under the direction of an enlightened conscience; you will lay open your heart to the impressions, and your mind to the enlightening influence and sole guidance of divine truth, as it is there unfolded. You will allow neither indolence to withhold, nor fear to restrain you from following the light, wherever it shall lead; nor from searching with a con-

stant and upright zeal, that you may perceive its track, and not mistake its direction.

In imparting to others the result of your inquiries, you will express your opinions with that degree of confidence only, which a fair estimate of their evidence will warrant, and with due respect and candour for opposite opinions;—not restrained from the expression of useful truth lest it should be ill received, nor impelled by a foolish vanity or fondness for singularity, to be frequently obtruding upon your hearers new speculations, which are either doubtful, or perplexing, or of little use. While you refuse to give up the freedom of your own mind, you will be as little disposed to encroach on the rights of others. As little will you think of imposing upon others, as of receiving yourself, any other master than our common Lord, any other rule of faith than the written records of the Gospel, any other interpreter of those records, than each man's own understanding, aided by such light as he can obtain.

You will not suffer the cause of truth and pure religion to want the support of your exertions, and the influence which your name would give it, lest you should thereby lose or endanger your personal influence or ease.—Yet at the same time you will have a reasonable regard for your own reputation; not to sacrifice it needlessly, not to make it a martyr to your pride or your passions; that you may have it in your power to lend it sometimes to the most important of all causes.

It is a happiness of the present age in this section of the Christian world, that the temptation to be unfaithful either by withholding or disguising the truth, is

comparatively small. The days of intellectual darkness and religious despotism are past. The rights of conscience are now clearly defined, and their nature and limits settled. Christian liberty is established. The *principle* will now be scarcely called in question, and what remains of an opposite *spirit* and *practice* will not long survive. Attempts to fasten fetters on the human mind for the purpose of stopping the march of improvement *must* prove inefficacious. There is a principle of resistance to it, gaining strength by the progress of intellectual improvement and religious knowledge, which cannot fail eventually to triumph over all obstacles. It is not too much to *hope*, that before the present century shall have elapsed, any attempts to restrain religious freedom by fixing the limits of inquiry and setting bounds to improvement in religious knowledge, will be regarded with the same sentiments, with which *we*, at the present day, look back to the fines, imprisonments, civil disabilities, and ecclesiastical censures of the seventeenth century; and the dungeon, the stake, and the nameless instruments of torture, which have fixed so foul a stain on the character of the religion of the century that preceded.

But the progress of every thing that is most valuable, is gradual and slow. That spirit of true piety and good will to men, which leads to all real improvement, is temperate and discreet, as it is firm and resolute. It is never rash and impetuous. It is never impatient and restless. It is not overbearing, and disposed to force its way faster, than the way for it is fairly prepared. It is also satisfied with the conduct of providence, which

usually accomplishes its purposes in the moral as in the natural world, by a steady but imperceptible progress. May you, my dear Sir, have the satisfaction of witnessing its progress and partaking its blessings. Especially may you be one of the favored instruments of providence, for restoring, as far as it has been corrupted, and preserving so far, as it remains unimpaired, the faith which was once delivered to the saints;—that faith, which Jesus taught, and for which his Apostles labored, and suffered, and gave up every earthly hope. May you be animated by a spirit like theirs; and may you resemble them also in the success of your ministry. And I pray God that your connexion with a Society, which I have so much reason to remember with gratitude and affection, may be as happy and as useful, as its commencement is pleasant and promising; that your reasonable expectations founded on pledges of the spirit and dispositions, which you may expect to find in your connexion with this people, and their best wishes and hopes in return, may be fully realized; and that a long career of usefulness, extending its beneficial influences to generations yet to be born, may be crowned with the present comforts, and the everlasting rewards, which belong to those, who have shone as lights in the world, and have been the instruments of Heaven in turning many to righteousness.

Our discourse, in the spirit and design of it, is applicable to societies as well, as to their pastors,—to those who receive the messages of Heaven, as well as to those, who are appointed to deliver them.

If it be the duty of the messenger of God, to speak

what God commands, without fear and without reserve, it is not less the duty of those, to whom he is sent, to hear it with that respect which is due to divine counsels —without prejudice, with an inquiring mind, with a sincere love of truth; and to be careful to do nothing which shall restrain the freedom of the preacher—intimidate him, tempt him to disguise, or compel him to keep back any part of the truth or duty, which he has it in charge to preach. I have said that it becomes the Christian minister always to proceed with moderation, to exercise prudence, to be tender and forbearing even with respect to unreasonable prejudices. But let me say, it is equally the duty of people on the other hand, not to give unnecessary occasion for the exercise of this tenderness, prudence and forbearance; to disarm themselves of all that unbending pride of opinion, which will open its eyes to no light, that it has not seen before, and refuses all reformation of practice. It is their duty, not indeed to give implicit credence to what they hear, but to listen with attention, with candour and with the sincere love of truth, and by searching the scriptures daily, whether the things they hear are so; at once encourage their teachers to the most perfect openness and sincerity in the expression of their faith, and at the same time stimulate them to diligence in their inquiries, knowing that they preach to those, who will examine and judge for themselves, and who are capable of distinguishing, when they are guided by the pure light of revealed truth, and when they are carelessly contenting themselves with the crude reveries of an undisiplined imagination. When they are extending their view to

the path and the prospects opening before them; and when, with their eyes closed, they are servilely treading the steps that have been trode before.

My Brethren of this church and Christian society. You need not that I should remind you of your personal concern in the subject of this discourse, and your particular duty growing out of the present interesting occasion. The spirit with which your proceedings have been marked through a train of circumstances of no common difficulty and trial; and the degree of harmony with which you have been enabled to proceed to the choice of a pastor to stand in the room of one, who had filled so large a place in your confidence and affections; are a pledge to him and to us of the dispositions, which he is here to find, and of that sober sense of religion, and liberal regard for its institutions, which promise to make his ministry pleasant and useful.

The pastor, whom you have chosen, we trust will meet these dispositions with correspondent feelings, and with a readiness to reciprocate every liberal advance on your part with answerable efforts on his.—We trust, too, that as a Christian teacher, set for the defence of the Gospel; as an ambassador of Christ, sent to beseech men to be reconciled to God, he will come to you in the spirit of the faithful prophet; and you will not be displeased to have him address you in his plain and honest style, "what my God saith, that will I speak;" and I am sure you will never, by calling in question this part of his liberty, oblige him to enforce it by an appeal like that, to which the holy apostles of our Lord were driven in the faithful discharge of *their* duty;—

"Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." "For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." I am sure you will encourage him in a conscientious discharge of every part of his ministerial duty, recollecting that when he is most faithful to his Lord and Master, he is most faithful to you; and that you have then the least cause to be offended, and to think him your enemy, when he is most plain and unreserved in telling you the truth. Remember, that the more you give him your confidence, and lend your attention to his instructions, and endeavour to render his ministry useful, the more lively interest and the stronger attachment will he feel; he will be excited to higher exertions, will make them with more courage and confidence, and the more successful will be his labors.

My Christian friends, we now commend you, with our best wishes and fervent prayers, to the guidance and benediction of that God, who in former years, in the season of darkness and difficulty and trial, caused light to spring up, and gave you peace and joy; who then in the time of visitation, ceased not to regard you with kindness; who has been the repairer of breaches, as often as you have had occasion to call upon him; and who has now directed your steps to the accomplishment of your purposes and hopes.—May he still continue to guide and to bless you. May you have the joy of knowing that the streams of his goodness have not failed, and that he has provided for the children not less faithfully than he before provided for the fathers. May he cause, that the pastor, whom you now call to

your service, and welcome to your affections, shall "come to you in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ," and that you shall receive him as becomes the character in which he appears; that you shall listen to the lessons of wisdom and messages of grace, which he shall bring for your instruction and comfort from the holy oracles; and that receiving the truth in the love of it, you may be sanctified thereby, redeemed from all iniquity, and purified to become a peculiar people, zealous of good works, and meet for the heavenly inheritance.

THE CHARGE,

Delivered to the Rev. CHARLES BROOKS, at his Ordination,
By Rev. THADDEUS MASON HARRIS, D. D.
Pastor of the First Church in Dorchester.

BROTHER,

THE Ecclesiastical Council, convened for the purpose of ordaining you over this Church and Society, have appointed me to give you the CHARGE which makes an usual part of the solemnities of such occasions. Receive it in their name.

Although in this we imitate Apostolic example, we pretend not to assume Apostolic authority. We claim no right to prescribe opinions for the standard of your faith, nor to dictate what doctrines you must preach; for these we refer you to the instructions of our common Master: but as the office into which we have now introduced you is the most solemn, and has attached to it the greatest responsibility, of any in which a mortal can engage, we think it highly proper to point out to you some of the principal duties which you will be called to discharge, and earnestly to exhort you by diligence and faithfulness to approve yourself a good Minister of Jesus Christ.

As an ordained preacher of the Gospel, engaged for its promotion and set for its defence, you are to use your best endeavours to extend the knowledge of its

truth, to vindicate its principles and doctrines, and to place its evidences in such a clear and convincing light that the doubting may have their objections removed, the sceptical their cavils confuted, and believers be more and more established in the faith.

You will aim to dispense the truths of Religion with that solemnity which is due to their infinite importance, with that perspicuity which cannot fail to enlighten the understanding, and with that affectionate earnestness which is best calculated to secure attention, produce conviction, and influence conduct. Invariably regarding the great design which the public teacher of morality and religion should ever have in view, *the making of men wise and good, enlightened Christians, and objects of the divine approbation*, you will choose those topics of discourse which are most likely to exhibit a just knowledge of human duty, to incline those who attend upon your instructions to receive the truth in the love of it, and lead them to obey from the heart the holy precepts enjoined for their observance.

Your pastoral care and labours are to be more immediately and especially devoted to the Church and Society over whom you have now been placed, and whose spiritual and eternal interests you are bound to do all in your power to promote. Having chosen you to be their religious instructer and guide, they now look up to you for counsel and direction in the way in which they should go, for information in the things which belong to their peace and edification, and for those lessons of virtue and holiness by which they shall be made wise unto salvation. Surely, then, you will diligently teach them the

knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, exhibit to them the doctrines of the Gospel with all possible clearness, instruct them in the essential principles of Christian morality, explain to them the terms of divine acceptance, point out the necesssity of faith, repentance and holy obedience, and urge them to fulfil all righteousness by the powerful arguments and motives which are derived from a regard to the authority of God, a concern for their own everlasting happiness, and a reference to that solemn account which is to be rendered at a future tribunal.

Adapt your discourses to the various ages, capacities, characters, and circumstances of your hearers.

Feed your people with knowledge and understanding, giving to every one a portion in due season; and by manifestation of the truth commend yourself to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

Lead in the public devotions with unaffected piety; administer the ordinances in their original simplicity; and bless the congregation in the name of the Lord.

Watch over your flock with vigilance and tenderness. Make your pastoral intercourse agreeable and useful. Consider yourself as the appointed protector and helper of your people. Visit the sick and dying as a kind and faithful counsellor. Offer to the afflicted and bereaved your tender sympathy, and pour into their hearts the soothing consolations of religion; and be to all a sure and safe guide in every scene of duty and trial.

Let us also remind you that to exhibit in your own life and conduct such proofs of the worth and loveliness of Christian principles as shall render you "an example

to believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith and in purity," is indispensably necessary to conciliate and preserve respect to your person and give interest and efficacy to your instructions. Be particularly careful, therefore, to appear in the world as becomes your sacred office, and to maintain at all times such a gravity and dignity of sentiment and demeanour, and such a true Christian propriety in all your views, schemes and pursuits as are most befitting your profession, most likely to ensure the just estimation in which it is desirable that the clerical character should ever be regarded, and best calculated to extend its influence in society.

In fine, we charge you to make full proof of your ministry. Study to shew yourself approved of God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. Take heed to yourself, and to your doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this you shall both save yourself and them that hear you.

Devoutly commending you to God, and imploring his blessing on your person and your labors, we hope that you may continue to enjoy the entire confidence and increasing affection of this people, exercise acceptably your ministry among them through many pleasant years, promote their spiritual edification, and train up their children in all knowledge and goodness, be their crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus, and receive the rewards of approved fidelity in the realms of everlasting bliss and glory. Amen!

RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP,

BY REV. CONVERS FRANCIS,

Pastor of the Church in Watertown.

By the usual solemnities, you, my Friend and Brother, have been consecrated to the arduous and responsible office of a minister of the Gospel. In this sacred place, which is to be the scene of your public labors, from which you will, as we trust, dispense instruction and consolation, will guide the wandering, awaken the indifferent, reclaim the sinner, and animate the saint, you have been set apart to your important work. Here at the altar, you have devoted yourself to the high and holy cause of Christian truth, which is the cause of God and man;—and I know you will believe me, when I say, that it is with heartfelt and unmingled pleasure, that I now come to present to you the pledge of Christian affection and union. There is certainly in this occasion, that, which makes us feel how richly we are blessed, by being bound together in the ties of a religion of love and concord. It is our happiness, that the influence of higher motives is assisted and strengthened, by the support of Christian union. He, who is "set for

the defence of the Gospel," feels it to be no inconsiderable privilege, that he is not compelled to stand insulated and alone; but that in connexion with those, who are engaged in the same labors to do good, he may receive and impart light and warmth and strength. The grasp, by which he clings to his duty, is not made nerveless and faint, by the loneliness of solitary exertion. While his eye is fixed on his recompense in heaven, he may walk hand in hand with his brethren on earth. And though we are not exposed to the dangers and toils, which the first heralds of the Gospel were obliged to encounter, yet our churches have with great propriety continued the custom of tendering to each new laborer in the vineyard of Christ, the apostolical sign of Christian fellowship. In the name, then, and by the direction of the council, I present to you, my brother, the right hand of fellowship. Take it in the spirit, in which it is offered;—receive it, as we wish to give it, as the pledge of confidence, the symbol of cooperation, the promise of communion, the token of interest and sympathy in your feelings and your cares. We thus, too, acknowledge you, as a brother and equal in the sacred office; we thus tell you, that we consider you as standing on the same ground with ourselves, that we claim no right to control, no authority to direct you, remembering, as we do, that we have one Master, even Christ, and that all we are brethren; and believing, as we do, that the instructions of divine truth are the only rallying point of our faith. The pretensions to a power, which God never gave, have but too often kindled a flame, which the gentle spirit of the Gospel has frequently been

unable to quench ; and which has seldom been extinguished, till it has consumed whatever of mild, generous and holy feeling it could find to prey upon. By giving you the right hand, we signify our wish to put far from us such claims and such feelings ;—we express our desire to go on together with you, in the great work of enlightening our fellow-men on subjects, the importance of which is commensurate with eternity ; of unfolding and arraying before mankind the great truths of our holy religion, in their original simplicity and purity ; of doing something to swell the triumphs of unadulterated Christianity, and to scatter the clouds, which have so heavily darkened its holy light. While we thus welcome you to the duties and recompenses, the cares and reliefs, the difficulties and encouragements of the Christian ministry, we wish to be joined with you in those ties of fellowship, which should ever unite the preachers of the same religion, the servants of the same Master. We promise you our assistance and kindness, and we ask yours in return. God grant, that the anxieties and toils of our sacred profession, may have no other effect, than to animate you and us, to greater diligence and vigor in the holy service ; and that every year may find us more fervent, watchful and intrepid in the cause of our Saviour and our God.

I have endeavored to express to you the sentiments of this council. But in speaking of my personal feelings, a more difficult task remains. My friend and brother, accept again this hand, as an assurance of the joy with which I meet you in this place, on this occasion ; and of the interest I feel in an event which, I trust, will do

much for your happiness and usefulness. We have been so long connected, as to render it unnecessary for me to trespass on the decorum of this place, by professions of private friendship. I trust the higher and nobler duties, to which we are now called, will serve but to strengthen and elevate the associations of feeling, so natural to those who have passed together from childhood to manhood, and whose minds have been near to each other in the forming period of life. The sentiments, which have taken root in youth, will, I hope, never grow old and wither away;—and it is consoling to reflect, that those are things of which time cannot rob us. I need not tell you, how sincerely I sympathize in the trembling solicitude, with which you look forward to the duties and trials of your new situation, for they are feelings still fresh in my own mind. You have doubtless thought of the connexion with the people of your charge, in its various bearings, and your heart has welcomed its obligations in the spirit of a Gospel minister. No wonder that youth and inexperience should look with anxiety on such duties, as are now before you. But with anxiety let hope be mingled. Remember, my brother, there is a Power which can strengthen the feeble hands and animate the fainting heart. God will not desert the cause of Christian truth, and in that cause you are engaged. And is it not an employment in itself full of recompenses, to do what we may, to make men better and happier; to plead for that religion which came from heaven to man; to help on the great moral effects, which Christianity is designed to produce, and to point our fellow-mortals, as we

travel together, to that bright hope, which beams on us all?--Among the first preachers of the Gospel, there was a man, to whom no form of labor or of pain was unknown, and on whom the stores of suffering were exhausted; yet, that man could say, "rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice." Give this spirit a place in your heart, my brother, and walk in that path, which is still bright with the glory of the Redeemer's example. God only knows, whether we shall be permitted to stand long at the altar; while we are there, may our ministrations be faithful, that we may hereafter hear the joyous welcome "well done," at the bar of heaven.

"What thou liv'st, live well,
"How long or short, permit to Heaven."

Let us remember the promise and swerve not; "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

To you, too, Christian brethren and friends, we would present the fellowship and congratulations of your sister churches. We rejoice with you on this occasion, and offer our prayers for the continuance of your happiness. "May you be built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." Receive the pastor of your choice, as the minister of God for good to you; strengthen his hands and encourage his heart, and let him repose on your confidence and affection. May the union between him and you, which has this day been sanctioned, be a long, a bright and a happy union, and may it be twined with all the virtues and graces of a

Christian temper. May he so preach and you so improve, that you may at last meet with joy in that world, where "they who are wise shall shine, as the brightness of the firmament, and they who turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever."

A SERMON

DELIVERED AT THE ORDINATION OF THE

REV. WILLIAM HENRY FURNESS,

AS PASTOR OF THE

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL

UNITARIAN CHURCH

IN PHILADELPHIA,

JANUARY 12, 1825.

BY HENRY WARE, JUN.

MINISTER OF THE SECOND CHURCH IN BOSTON.

TOGETHER WITH

THE CHARGE,

BY AARON BANCROFT, D. D. OF WORCESTER, (MASS.)

AND THE

RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP,

BY EZRA S. GANNETT, OF BOSTON.

PHILADELPHIA:

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY ABRAHAM SMALL.

1825.

SERMON.

Brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified even as it is among you.—2 Thessalonians, iii. 1.

The design for which the public institutions of our religion are maintained and its teachers set apart, is so well expressed in these words, that they offer a suitable introduction to our remarks on the present occasion. They declare the object which we purpose to promote, in ordaining our brother to the work of the holy ministry. They describe the end for which he is to labour in the fulfilment of his ministry. They express that spirit of devout dependence upon God, which should occupy the hearts of those who are this day to receive a pastor. 'Brethren,' says the apostle,' 'pray for us,' the ministers of Christ, 'that the word of the Lord'—that word, which we preach, which is God's truth, and the sanctification of man—'may have free course and be glorified' —may have a wide and unobstructed prevalence, and be an object of the admiration, affection, and faith of mankind.

This is the object of our prayers and labours. This is the object to which we devote our brother. It may not be unsuitable to the occasion, to remark on *some of the means by which this object may be effected;* which I

shall attempt to do under the two divisions suggested by the text.

I. 1. In the first place, the circulation of the scriptures is a powerful means of effecting this object. They are, in one sense, the word of God, though not in the sense of our text, as the New Testament did not exist at the time of the apostle's writing this epistle. This volume is the repository of those facts and instructions on which the whole system of our religion rests. The more widely, then, it is known, and the more carefully it is studied, the more generally will religious truth prevail; and if any errors have been mingled with it in its passage down to the present age, the more readily will they be removed. One chief cause of error is want of knowledge. Men uphold false systems, because they are ignorant of the true. And the great book of truth cannot be familiarly in the hands of all, exercising its rightful influence over minds and hearts, and yet the dominion of error and falsehood stand. The evil at present is, that the scriptures are neither sufficiently read, nor with sufficient freedom. The many still pay too great deference to their theological standards and religious superiors, and to the impressions of early years. They suppose that they know their religion already, and therefore, either do not study the bible at all, or they study it for some other purpose than that of learning. So that the light of truth is prevented from reaching their understandings and hearts, either by closing the volume which contains it, or by closing their eyes, when the volume is opened. Whatever is done then, toward promoting the frequent, studious, intelligent perusal of the sacred volume, is so much for the advancement and influence of the Gospel; and as it was the bringing out of the scriptures from their hidden places, which shook the power of the Papal throne; so it is the thorough

removing of the veil from them, and introducing them freely and fearlessly to the understandings of men, which shall ensure the dominion of the consistent and glorious Gospel.

2. The prevalence of religion is to be ensured by the maintenance of Public Worship; a means the more particularly to be noticed, as it is the principal object for which christian societies are organised. The influence of this is incalculable. No one can doubt, who reflects but for a moment, that more is owing to it than to all other causes; and that no mode of diffusing and perpetuating knowledge, and the influence of knowledge, has ever been devised, to be compared with the wisdom of this. Public worship among the heathen was quite a different thing; for it was not familiar, social, and personal, and above all, it was not attended with regular instruction concerning truth and duty. It was rather the magnificent spectacle of a high festival, which gratified the senses with its opulence and pomp, but had no concern with the intellectual and moral nature. In the christian system, it addresses itself to the hearts of men, to their interests, feelings, and wants. It exercises its power over individual character. It meets the people in all their little communities, renews, at short intervals, its lessons on the most important truths, and maintains an unintermitted oversight of their moral sentiments and habits. It is impossible that the effects should not be vast. This silent, steady, uniform, operation, must act upon the moral world, like the quiet and equal warmth of the sun upon the vegetable creation. The action of one day may seem insignificant; but the constant and permanent action works wonders. Men are sometimes led, doubtingly, to complain, that no greater effects are witnessed. They should consider that this institution of our religion is a vast and exten-

sive machine, operating on an immense scale. A single congregation is but one of the little wheels in the complicated arrangement, and may seem to move on without bringing much to pass. We must survey it in its connexion with the whole. We must think of this action as exerted upon a whole people, and as going on from year to year, and from generation to generation. We must consider what society would be without it. Level with the ground your places of social worship. Let the voice of the preacher be hushed. Let the people be no more collected to hear of their duties to God and to one another. Let the seventh day be undistinguished —no respite from the vain pleasures and passionate bustle of worldly pursuits; no intermission of the eager chase of enjoyment and gain; but from year to year, generation after generation, let the whole community be given up to temporary interests, unreminded of God and eternity. It is easy to conjecture the religious ignorance and moral desolation that would ensue, and how rapidly the march would be taken backward to the melancholy condition of the heathen. What reflecting man is not aware, that a large portion of the Christian community have no knowledge of their religion, except what they gain from the weekly services of God's House. They are excited to read the scriptures only by the impulse which is given there. And therefore the institution of public worship is that which sustains among men, certainly the salutary influence, and probably the very existence, of Christianity itself. Without this indeed, it might be known to the studious and inquiring, just as the systems of Plato and the Stoics: but its blessings would not be diffused, nor its holy and rejoicing light be shed upon the dwellings, and poured into the hearts of its now countless votaries.

There is a striking illustration of the truth of these

remarks in the history of the Jewish people. That people, although the selected nation of God, acquainted familiarly with a law which had been revealed under circumstances the most imposing and impressive; every step of their existence marked with the most surprising displays of the divine presence and power; possessing a temple and a ritual which surpassed in magnificence the most splendid institutions of the heathen world;—yet were not restrained from constant proneness to other religions, and frequent relapses into idolatry. Observe the cause of this. The sacrifices could be offered but at one spot. Their place of public assembling was but at one city; to which indeed all the men were compelled to resort three times a year; but only three times, and they became not very scrupulous for more than one attendance, while the women and children were not bound to attend at all. It therefore happened that the inhabitants on the distant borders derived no satisfaction from the pompous ceremonials of their law, of which they were scarcely witnesses or partakers; they were far nearer to the altars of the Gentiles than to their own, better acquainted with their worship, and therefore easily drawn into it. After their long sufferings in the captivity at Babylon, they erected synagogues in all their villages, collected in them for reading and expounding the law every sabbath day, and being thus perpetually interested in their own religion, were no longer attracted by that of their neighbours.

It is evident, therefore, brethren, how much is due to the institution of public worship. Whenever you assemble here with those who keep holy time, you are giving essential aid to the cause of divine truth and human happiness. There is said by philosophers to be such a connexion between the distant spheres of the ma-

terial system, that no impulse or motion can be felt by one without the participation of all; so that even the falling of a stone to the earth, creates a concussion which is recognised and answered in the remotest star. There is a connexion not unlike this, between the different bodies that compose the Christian system on earth. The operation of each is necessary to that of the whole; the hindrance of one is the hindrance of all. When you bind yourselves by a vow to-day to labour with your pastor for the regular maintenance of the social institutions of our faith, you are doing what affects the Church universal of our Lord, and is recognised in that distant world where the angels rejoice over every repenting sinner. And whenever, by neglect, or contempt, or absence, you think merely to testify your dislike of a poor preacher, or your love of an afternoon's repose, you in fact do all, which you can do, to destroy the influence of the Gospel in the world;—which, if all should follow your example, would soon eradicate its very existence.

3. Intimately connected with public worship, so that indeed we can hardly separate it even in thought, is the next means which I shall mention of spreading the influence of religion,—namely, Preaching. This is the great divinely appointed instrument of truth and salvation. It pleases God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them who believe. Without this, public worship, as may easily be observed, would lose its chief efficacy as a moral means, and the Bible would soon cease to be the most common and powerful of books.

We cannot but admire the wisdom which made this happy provision for the perpetuity of religious knowledge. Simple and efficacious as it is, the Founder of christianity appears to have been the first to discern in it that moral power, which should move and control the

world. Other religious teachers and reformers had instructed orally, but it was in schools and groves, a select number, and for a limited time. Jesus was the teacher of man. He addressed himself to the multitude. He adapted himself to every condition and character. He spoke as the reformer, the leader, the friend, of the human race; and his "gracious words" went forth throughout the whole mass of society, and changed the moral complexion of the world. His miracles indeed gave authority to his doctrine; but it was his doctrine which wrought the change. His supernatural powers converted men to the faith that he was from God; but it was his preaching which converted them from sin. And in that effect of his preaching, we perceive as distinctly the agency of God, as in his raising the dead to life. That his command should call Lazarus from the tomb, and that preaching should reform the religions of the civilised world, are equally striking demonstrations of the presence and power of God; for they are alike vast effects from apparently inadequate causes. A poor uninstructed peasant, by labouring for three years, in the most despised corner of the most despised nation on earth, whose whole territory is but a speck on the map of the world—laid the foundation of a work which was to survive the changes of empire, and the ruins of the philosophies and religions of man. And this, without seeming to make provision by any means adequate to such an effect. Other teachers have committed their wisdom to writing, lest, being entrusted to words, which are but breath, it should be dispersed and lost. But Jesus confided in the divine energy of his doctrine; and, with an unconcern truly sublime, cast it abroad to make its own way and perpetuate its own existence—sufficient proof that he knew it to be from God. So it has proved. Human instructors and reformers have elaborately wrought

out their systems; have sometimes clothed them in eloquence which seemed little less than inspiration, and promised perpetual continuance to their influence over man. Yet how small and short has that influence proved! How have their sects disappeared; and by how very few are their works even read, though still accounted among the perfect productions of the human mind! While Jesus, uninstructed in human philosophy, with no attainments in the elegant learning of the world, teaching but for three years, and putting not a syllable upon record—has yet made his instructions as familiar to the nations as their own native tongues—has bestowed on the humblest of his followers a wisdom superior to that of the Grecian masters themselves—nay, has affected the whole mass, both of sentiment and character, throughout the whole, as those great and laborious and long lived men were able to affect only a few familiar friends within the privileged sphere of their own personal influence.

By what means was this done? It was through the institution of preaching. He sent forth his followers to do as he had done,—to spread and transmit his religion by personal intercourse with men—to talk with them of God and their souls as a man talks with his friend—to come near to their understandings and hearts by address in familiar speech, by thrilling tones of voice, by earnest gesture, by the appealing eye and the eloquent countenance—by that living and breathing instrument of communication which God has made, as much more powerful than the dumb register of written words, as the creation of God is higher than the invention of man.

They thus went abroad, miracles attesting their commission, but with no learning or accomplishments beyond what their Master had given them, with the simple but sincere and pathetic history of his life and teach-

ing ;—and the temples of false religion, the altars of pagan idolatry, the immoralities of heathen superstition vanished before them, and the holy church rose upon their ruins. By the same means it has been perpetuated from age to age. And the efficiency of this instrument has perhaps in no way been more distinctly manifested, than in the fact, that the religion itself has varied and changed with the character and fidelity of its teachers, has risen and declined with their rise and fall, and has from no cause suffered so much as from those who rose to power and exercised dominion, but would not impart instruction ; became bishops and popes, but would not preach ;—and has been recovered by those who have devoted themselves with zeal to the persevering preaching of the word. The press indeed aided and established the Reformation ; but it was the preachers of the Reformation who animated and instructed the press ; and if these living oracles should become dumb, even the omnipotence of the press would not be able to withstand the rapid and sad decline of religious knowledge, and its moral influence.

Observe, then, my brother, the dignity of your vocation. Consider to what a glorious company you are this day joined; what a mighty instrument it is given you to wield, and what an unspeakable honour is yours to be joined with Christ and his apostles in the sublime work of the spiritual emancipation of man. God give you strength to do as they did, and honour you with large success !

4. Another of the means to be named in which the pastor and his people are to co-operate, is the observance of the Ordinances of our faith. No system of religion can extensively prevail, which is not aided by its hold on the inferior nature of man. The purely

spiritual, addressed to a being not purely spiritual, will seldom find access except by external accompaniments, which are more needful to some minds, but in some measure are needful to all. And it is observable respecting the ordinances of the Gospel, that besides the ordinary efficacy attributable to stated rites, they have the weight of an historical testimony to the truth of the religion itself: they are in the nature of monuments erected to the memory of its early facts, to which the very circumstance of their existence is incontrovertible evidence. They are perpetual vouchers for the truth of our religion; and by discontinuing them, you silence the venerable witnesses, which have existed from the day of our Lord, bearing testimony through all the ages. You hide from the world certain striking objects, peculiarly adapted to attract regard, to fix the inquiring attention, and prevent Christianity from being lost to the notice of man.

But beyond this general importance, is to be considered their value to the faith and comfort of believers. They revive in their minds, and keep fresh, the sense of their connexion with Christ, and their obligation to the truth. By simple, but affectionate and tender, appeals to their hearts, they increase their love, strengthen their faith, quicken their devotion, animate their obedience. They bring nearer to them a sense of that inestimable love which passes knowledge, and work in them a powerful admiration, and diligent imitation, of their holy and honoured Lord. No sincere and grateful believer can sincerely and gratefully offer himself or his child at the baptismal font, or sit down with brethren at the memorial of his master's love, without acknowledging an increase, or at least a confirmation, of the power of religion. No such one can neglect it, after once tasting its satisfactions, without experiencing

a decay of his interest in religion, and an unsatisfied thirst for the appropriate sustenance of his soul.

II. Having thus spoken, as far as the occasion demands, of the means by which we are to promote the free course of the Gospel, we proceed to the other part of our text, and inquire how we may cause it to be *glorified.* This is not a distinction without a difference; since that may be upheld by powerful institutions, and extensively prevail, which yet is not an object of reasonable reverence and admiration. And the friends of Christianity have done but a part of their duty when they have laboured for its diffusion, if they have not also secured for it the homage, respect, and love, which are its due.

That it rightfully challenges the submission and trust of man, as being in itself essentially and unspeakably glorious, is beyond controversy. Yet in order to be discerned as such, it must be seen as it is, in its own beautiful features, and native unmixed excellence. As it came from its author and was displayed in his life, none have ever been able to regard it with contempt or indifference. The eloquent tongue of infidelity itself, like that of the reluctant demons of old, has been compelled to utter its eulogy and bear witness to its heavenly name. But it might be veiled under such disguises, mingled with such crude and false philosophy, encumbered with such unnecessary appendages, and so implicated with the weakness and vices of its professed advocates, as to render it repulsive rather than glorious, and procure it enemies instead of friends.

They who are set for the defence of the Gospel must remember this, and be earnest to advance such a faithful representation of its doctrines, that even gainsayers shall acknowledge that "God is in them of a truth." In deciding what form of doctrine will most attract to

our religion the admiration and faith of mankind, we are liable to deceive ourselves by partial views and limited considerations. We are apt to judge too exclusively by what exists before our own eyes, and in the present state of the world. But we should reflect, that the doctrine which is most honoured now, may not be so permanently; that what now is thought to constitute the peculiar glory of revelation, may not be actually most glorious; while that which is the contempt of the majority, may not only, under other circumstances, become its admiration, but may be grand and eternal truth. History overflows with the proof of this position. There was a time when Christianity itself was every where spoken against, and its advocates numbered with the off-scouring of the world. There was a period when the Romish church was the honour and pride of undivided Christendom, while the noble company of the Reformers was trodden down in contempt. We are not therefore to judge of what shall be lastingly glorious by the present prevalence of any of its popular forms; but by its conformity with those attributes of the Divine nature, which are unchanging, those acknowledged laws of truth which never vary, and those principles of the human constitution which are in all ages the same. Every thing else changes with the change of circumstances and the fluctuating tide of manners and opinions. This tide has lifted on its surface, and borne on triumphantly before men, that system of doctrine which is now glorified as the uncorrupt and orthodox faith; but the waters may subside, as they often have done before, and bear it away, when they fall, to the deep gulph of neglect and oblivion. While the simple and more rational system, which is now the object of abuse from those who lead, and of horrour in those who follow, shall win to itself the faith and affection of the world, and rise in

glory, as it has been thrust down in shame. For this we are to toil. Let no hosts of opposition discourage us. To advance this, it may be that we must bear obloquy, reproach and suffering. But He who brought it to the world, endured it all before; like this holy doctrine, was despised and rejected of men: and as he triumphed and reigned, so shall this doctrine also.

It is true, that in whatever form Christian truth may prevail, it is not robbed of its lustre or power. It is one proof of its heavenly origin, that no corruptions have ever been able to hide its beauty and majesty, or palsy its energy. Its light has been seen and felt amid all the thick vapours and dark clouds that have been accumulated around it. But still, if all could be swept away, and the luminary shine from the firmament in its own free and unobscured splendour, how far more conspicuous would be its glory, and with what new and fervent admiration would it be welcomed!

We cannot doubt, then, that the simplest system of doctrines is most likely to advance the permanent glory of the Gospel. Every thing is admirable and sublime in proportion to its simplicity. The objects which are grandest in the works of Nature, are among the simplest. Of the sublime works of God, this is one of the striking characteristics. What more sublime, than the starry heavens, the lofty mountains, the unfathomable ocean, whether sleeping or tempestuous? Yet no objects are more simple, or offer less complication of ideas. The grandest of the works of man are also the simplest. Those admirable structures, whose ruins are the wonder of posterity, and those writings which are equally first in all ages, are for nothing so remarkable as for their noble simplicity. What is complicated and intricate, becomes obscure and wearisome; and the only things whose beauty is ever new, and whose at-

traction never ceases, are those which are plain and simple.

So it is with the Gospel. Compared with the complicated systems of the heathen world, and the multitudinous observances of the Mosaic dispensation, there is an obvious majesty in its simplicity, which speaks the perfected work of God. If you seek to render it imposing by a profusion of gorgeous observances, you may indeed seem to succeed for a time, and among some, as has happened in the disguises which it wore in the darker ages of the Church: but you hide its divinest charm, and liken it to the theatrical display of heathen worship. If you annex to it mysterious and subtle dogmas, which perplex the understanding and are fearful to the fancy, you may seem to excite veneration and awe; but still there was a profounder awe in the false mysteries of pagan superstition; and in the schools of the philosophers, there was as great ingenuity and subtlety of solemn dogmatism, when 'the world by wisdom knew not God,' as has ever existed in the schools of the fathers and doctors of metaphysical christianity. It is not thus that the religion of Jesus is to be glorified. It is when unadorned that it is adorned the most; when, stripped of all the dazzling and pompous accompaniments by which man would give lustre to the work of God,—it stands forth, as Jesus walked in Judea, humble, unpretending, without title or state, yet with a native mien of dignity and power, which impresses and overawes.

> O how unlike the complex works of man,
> Heaven's easy, artless, unencumbered plan!
> No meretricious graces to beguile,
> No clustering ornaments to clog the pile;
> From ostentation as from weakness free,
> It stands, like the cerulean arch we see,
> Majestic in its own simplicity.
>
> "

This simplicity of the Gospel is seen in its *object*, and in the *manner* in which it accomplishes that object.

Its object is the salvation of man, that is, his preparation for the happiness of heaven, by forming in him a holy heart and character,—an object simple and unambiguous, yet one of the grandest which can be conceived by the human mind.

That this is the single and final purpose of the christian revelation, is written so plainly on its very front that it cannot be mistaken. This is what is meant when it proposes to 'make all things new;' when it speaks of the universal regeneration of man and earth; and would 'purify a peculiar people zealous of good works.' Amidst all the differences of Christians respecting the doctrines and forms of their religion, it has never been matter of question that this is its end. Whatever influence the incautious interpretation and preaching of the word may often appear to have had in relaxing the obligation of virtue, and encouraging sin; whatever opinions inconsistent with a pure heart and moral life may have been vehemently maintained; yet it has never been deliberately denied, that a pure heart and holy life are the intended and essential results of the Christian system, without which it does not save.

For this reason, it is the more melancholy, that any should be found in the Christian pulpit, to speak in sneering and contemptuous tones of morality, and thus render it an object of suspicion and dislike to religious people. Doubtless there is an external superficial propriety, sometimes dignified with the name of morality, built upon worldly expediency, independent of the great principles of right, and the authority of God, which, in the view of the Christian, is utterly hollow and insufficient. But this should be referred to the class of wrong principles and motives. Speak of it as such,

strongly as you please; but it is a fatal error, on account of this mistake, to cast suspicion upon the very name of morals. For you thus lead men lightly to esteem, easily deride, and practically trample upon, what is as indispensable a part of Christian holiness, as the sermon on the mount is of the New Testament, or the ten commandments of the Old; and what can be no more innocently slighted, than those holy passages may be expunged from the sacred volume.

As the *object* of the Gospel is thus simple, so also, as I said, are its *means*.

These may be said to be Divine Truth. Truth is the great instrument by which, in this dispensation of God's grace, the human mind is wrought upon, subdued, guided, sanctified, saved. 'Sanctify them by thy *truth*; thy *word* is truth.' 'Being born again by the *word of God*, which liveth and abideth forever.'

This word, or truth, divides itself into two branches; doctrines, or principles, and precepts; in other words, instruction concerning the principles of religion, and concerning their application in practice. In regard to each, great is the simplicity of the means by which the gospel effects its objects.

In regard to *doctrines*, their great purpose is the formation of the religious principle. Those which are necessary to this, are few and intelligible. The religious principle, which frames the character of the religious man, and sanctifies him throughout by its influence, is that settled regard to the divine authority, presence, and perfections, which induces a necessary conformity to his will. Now what are the doctrines which are necessary to such a state of mind? That they cannot be very numerous or very difficult, is evident from this,—that the patriarchs, in the infancy of knowledge and religion, possessed it. The Apostle speaks of it in them

under the name of Faith, and declares that it qualified them to 'inherit the promises.' Now their faith, sufficient as it was, was a faith in no more articles than the existence, providence, and perfections of God, and a consequent trust in him and subjection to his will, under a sense of their accountableness.

It is evident therefore that the religious principle may exist upon the foundation of a few simple doctrines. It is equally evident that it does so exist beneath the Christian dispensation. Its great doctrines of God's authority and man's accountableness, together with the mission of Jesus as the promised Messiah and Saviour of men, and a future state of righteous retribution, are those on which the religious principle is now builded, and by which man is sanctified and saved. Or, to express the same thing in the words of our Lord himself; *This is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.* There are doubtless other truths connected with these and following from them. But these are the sufficient principles which lie at the foundation, and sustain, and lead to, the others. These are they which the holy scriptures alone enumerate, when they profess to assert what is essential to salvation. These, when they have made their abode in the mind, are able to control, to subdue, to correct, to elevate, to purify. They present the most grand and authoritative motives; they combine with themselves all that is affecting in the history and facts of our religion; and they pervade the mind, which heartily receives them, with holy and pure devotion.

Such is the simplicity of the Gospel in those doctrines through which it operates on men.

This representation, I am aware, does not acknowledge in the Christian system some of those features, which are by many thought to belong to it, and to con-

stitute its essential glory. It may seem to such less imposing; it certainly offers less gratification to that thirst for the mystical and mysterious, which some are so anxious to gratify, and which is so strong a propensity in the human constitution, that, if I believed in the original corruption of human nature, I might be inclined to number this among those depraved passions which are inimical to the truth. I certainly conceive it most consistent with the character of a *revealed* religion, that its revelations be clear and distinct, not wrapped up in obscurity and mysticism. They may not be within the grasp and full comprehension of the finite mind; but the mind must be able to know *what* they are; otherwise they are not revealed. Yet there has always been among men an unwise craving for what is mysterious, vague, inexplicable; for whatever oppresses and overwhelms the imagination, and is in some degree an object of terrific emotion. It is this which has in all ages created the insatiable curiosity to search the secrets of the grave; which has called forth the tales and terrors of supernatural apparitions, and the cruel and bloody superstitions which appertain to sorcery and magic. It is the same propensity which has led to the loading of all religions with fearful and dismaying appendages. A plain religion, which men can understand and explain, seems to them not sufficiently removed from human things, not sufficiently awful and distant, too well adapted to poor human understanding. They would have shadows, clouds, and darkness rest upon it; they would believe and worship, they know not what. When therefore Christianity came to them, plainly and frankly, to walk with them and converse with them as a familiar friend, they were both astonished and dissatisfied: they thought it ought not to be so simple as it appeared, and soon persuaded themselves that it was not; then they obscured it under the follies and fancies, mysteries and

forms, notions and speculations, which they had brought with them from their heathen faith and heathen philosophy. History tells us how sadly the pure doctrine soon became disfigured by the incorporation of pagan rites and philosophical dogmas: more and more obscured as the age grew darker and darker, until, in the midnight of the barbaric ages, it could hardly be distinguished amid its disguises, for the plain system of Christ. A single example of this may well illustrate this general position. In the early day of Christianity a synopsis of the Christian doctrine was drawn up, which has come down to us under the name of the Apostle's Creed. This describes what was then thought to be the orthodox faith; and it represents the Gospel so nearly according to its master's simplicity, that at this day the heterodox unitarian subscribes it as heartily as the orthodox trinitarian, and with far more consistency. But at the council of Nice, so great progress had been made in adapting the Gospel to the human love of the marvellous, that a new creed was fashioned, containing many very subtle and unintelligible distinctions. After a yet further lapse toward barbarism, a yet further adaptation was requisite; and then came forth the full maturity of the Athanasian creed, containing not only the most wonderful mysteries which a degenerate age could express, but the most hearty curses a profligate age could utter. These three creeds may be fairly regarded as three monuments, by which the ingress of the dark ages was marked. And in like manner they may serve to signify the progress of the light of the Reformation. The Athanasian creed is hardly named amongst Protestants, except with pity and horror. For even the members of that Church which still commands it to be read thirteen times a year, pay it neither deference nor respect. The Nicene symbol is fast losing its authority and veneration;

As knowledge and candor gain ground, the churches are more and more satisfied with the plain exposition of the Apostle's creed; many have even gone back to the true creed of the apostles in the holy scriptures.

Would to God that the progress of the Reformation had been more rapid and more thorough! But the same causes which rendered it necessary, have contributed to retard it. We are not to expect therefore that the Church will return at once to the simplicity that is in Christ. It is too plain and unpretending: yet, in truth, this is its glory; at present too little recognised, too much despised; yet a wonderful and unspeakable glory. There have been those who would not believe in the remedy which God has in late years provided for the most loathsome of diseases, because it is so simple; and just so, many will not believe that so simple a Gospel can work the regeneration of the world, and therefore they would fill it with wonders. Let *us*, brethren, receive it as it is, as it lies in the scriptures of truth. Let us not be anxious for other wonders; the greatest of all wonders is its simplicity. And nothing which the invention of man has added or can add, could so demonstrate "the wisdom of God and the power of God."

Besides the doctrinal portion of our religion, there is, I observed, its preceptive portion, which also operates as a chief means towards effecting its great design. Under this division there is a simplicity equally remarkable, though it is unnecessary to enter into so full an illustration. Nothing can be less complicated or obscure. The directions concerning duty are plain and comprehensive; not needlessly multiplied, and so referable to a few great principles, as to be liable to no doubt, forgetfulness or mistake. Love to God and to men is their substance. Whatever is inconsistent with

this, is forbidden: whatever is conformable to this, is duty. Love is the fulfilling of the law; he who cherishes the principle will never be guilty of a breach of the law. There is needed no extensive learning, no deep and laborious investigation, no profound and intricate ratiocination, to ascertain what the Lord requires of us: no volumes of refined casuistry, or metaphysical discussions, which should make it a "very learned, subtle, and ingenious thing to be a Christian." But the path is plain, and the directions unembarrassed; and the way-faring man, though a fool, need not err therein.

Such is the character in which the Gospel must be presented, if we would secure its true and permanent glory. I pass to remark more briefly in the next place, that if we would cause it to be glorified we must advocate it with zeal. The success of every cause, of whatever nature, is greatly dependent on the spirit of its friends. It is for them to present its claims, to urge them on the notice of men, to awaken attention to them, and to excite interest in others by evincing that it has had power to interest themselves. How many arduous and almost impossible enterprises have been achieved, by the simple force of the ardour with which their conductors prosecuted them! How many excellent plans of no very difficult accomplishment, have been suffered to fail, merely from want of zeal and enterprise in their behalf! With this truth impressed upon us by all the experience of the past, we cannot look for the Gospel to prevail in an opposing world, except it call forth the zealous operation of its friends. It never has been so, it never can be so. God has made the energy of man to work its prevalence in times past, and he has not changed the constitution of things. Throughout the history of the church, it has been the 'fervent in spirit' who have

commanded the attention and homage of men. Zeal, even when degenerated into fanaticism and separated from the aids of reason, has gathered followers and gained power. And reason, except when allied with zeal and active perseverance, has been little able to maintain, much less to extend, her rightful dominion.

God forbid, then, that the greatest and most important of all causes should be treated by its friends lightly and coolly; and that through any apprehension of being charged with 'madness,' they should avoid the earnest and burning 'words of truth and soberness,' and the ready self devotion of those who 'spend and are spent' to promote magnificent designs. A man without zeal lives to the condemnation either of his own heart, which is incapable of high moral fervour; or of his profession, which is unworthy of it. Zeal is doubtless a different thing in different men. In some men it cannot be excited to that passion, which it displays in others. But every man is susceptible of a moral energy of action, a devotion of spirit to some favourite object; and this is zeal—capable of cultivation and growth. Let it be cultivated and grow in the friends of religion, if they would advance their religion. It excites attention, sympathy, and co-operation. It is the spring of successful action. It is in character what eloquence is in language. It gives a man surprising power over the minds of others; it enables him to excite the hearts of the coolest, and engage the exertions of the most indolent. To act a great cause coldly is as disgraceful as to plead it sluggishly; and to do either is to aid in defeating it. It were better to be fanatical than indifferent, for then it might at least be seen that our religion has power to move and agitate. But where reason presides over the religious affections, the last thing to be apprehended is fanaticism; and success is not to be hoped or expected,

except men be addressed with fervour and earnestness, and their moral feelings be engaged by the beauty, grandeur, and excellence of what is in itself so holy and sublime, and so fitted to ensure the perfection of the human character.

At the same time, if we would cause the truth to be glorified, it must be advocated with Charity. There must be no bitterness, nor clamour, nor wrath, nor malice, nor evil speaking, in the Christian's zeal. All these are contrary to his Master's spirit, and hinder his cause. The spirit of intolerance and bigotry has been one of the principal obstacles to the progress of the church, and the improvement of man. It has led to the assumption of authority, which Christ never delegated, to the uttering of anathemas, which his word does not warrant, to the imposition of creeds, which bind the truth in fetters, and deprive the soul of its lawful light and liberty. Let all this be discouraged, here and elsewhere. Wherever Christ's proclamation of liberty has been heard, let not the pretensions of human bigotry be tolerated. It has shed the best blood of the church, and impiously striven to blot out the names of good men from the Lamb's book of life. In this blessed land its dungeons have been destroyed, and its faggots extinguished, and it has been cast down from the throne of power, where it wielded the magistrate's sword. But it still lodges in many an unhappy bosom, and blasts, with the venemous breath of its mouth, reputation, influence, and peace. As we honour the name of our Lord, let us wage against this foe a war of extermination. Let us not rest, nor hold our peace, till its power be utterly trodden under foot. Watch against it, pray against it, preach against it. Let not a word nor a thought plead for it in this holy place. No, my brother, though your people, with the madness of Israel when he asked a

king, should clamour for a creed that might exclude their own faith from improvement, and other believers from their fellowship, or should press you to fulminate from this place the denunciations of reviling and ill-will which have sounded from other pulpits; resist them to the utmost, and pay any price rather than so far forget the spirit and example of your Lord. And if you, brethren, should ever find in your pastor this sad breach of holy charity, fail not to remind him that he is unfaithful to his trust, and enter your loud protest against this dishonour to a good cause, this desecration of a holy office. True religion will triumph only as it is free. You set limits to its empire whenever you abridge the right of free inquiry, or allow any man to place himself on the judgment seat of Christ, or nourish in your own bosoms a censorious temper and a spiritual ambition.

But above all, in the last place, there is nothing which will so tend to promote the honour of the true gospel, as the faithful and consistent lives of its friends. Its highest eulogy is read in their elevated and uniform devotion, their trust in God, their equanimity in change and trial, their fidelity in every relation, their integrity, purity, humility, benevolence. To form these virtues in them, to render them 'perfect in every word and work,' is the very object to be effected by their adherence to the Gospel. If it be not effected, discredit is brought upon the religion itself, which they profess to advocate, for the sake of a good influence, which their own lives declare it does not possess. But when their conversation is according to the blamelessness and purity of the Christian doctrine, fashioned upon the model of Jesus Christ, and illustrious with the consistent beauty of his excellencies; it is a living and breathing eulogy of their faith, which every one sees, understands, feels, and acknowledges. The profound scholar, the

learned theologian, the eloquent orator, may demonstrate, illustrate, and adorn; but the devout and humble believer, who 'shows his faith by his works,' will do far more to convince and win. Has it not always been so? Is it not when adorned by the charitable and unspotted lives of its friends, that the religion of Jesus has been most glorious and admirable? And has it not been cast down from its honourable place, whenever worldliness and hypocrisy have marked the character of its advocates? Does not the history of the Church in all ages teach us, that however glorious our religion may be in itself, yet the ill conduct of its friends may obscure that glory, and their exemplary lives render it more conspicuous? So that we are to regard it as given into our hands, a precious, solemn, awful charge, to be by us adorned and recommended to mankind, or to be by us disfigured, obscured, and made a reproach among men;—even as it is written, 'My name is blasphemed among the nations because of you.' What a responsibility then is ours! God grant that we may be able faithfully to sustain it!

In occupying the time allotted me on this occasion, I have endeavoured to point out the principal means which it suggests, of advancing religion through its public institutions, and of recommending it to the faith and admiration of men through the character of the doctrine preached, and by the zeal, liberality, and consistency of life, with which the great cause is advocated. To you, my dear brother, these topics particularly address themselves. They concern your duties, your happiness, your success, in that calling to which you now devote yourself in the presence of God and man. It becomes the object of your life to uphold the worship and ordinances of the Gospel, and to labour for the advancement of its glory in the world. May God grant you a

great blessing! May he give you zeal, charity, and piety, and make you eminently serviceable to the cause of divine truth and human salvation. In the situation to which you have been called, there are circumstances of peculiar trial. They fill your mind with solicitude, and they demand from us expressions and acts of sympathy and aid, which I trust we shall not fail to render you. May they never be withheld, and never be ineffectual; and in every trial, may He especially be your support, who is nearer and greater than all earthly friends. There are also peculiar circumstances of encouragement and grounds of hope, which may well cheer and animate your exertions. May your best hopes of usefulness and happiness be fulfilled. May you find your separation from the friends of your youth, compensated in the kindness and fidelity of those, who welcome you as one of themselves. May you have the great happiness of witnessing the prevalence of pure and undefiled religion in all its heavenly and holy doctrines, in all its pure and comforting influences, in all its correcting and regenerating power; and having been with this people 'fellow helpers to the truth' on earth, may you and they see the full glory, and partake the unspeakable felicity of the blessed in the eternal kingdom of God.

Brethren of this Christian Society—We offer you our congratulations on the auspicious occurrence of this day. Long and faithfully have you persevered in administering the worship and ordinances of God's house, according to the dictates of your consciences; and, faithful to their dictates, you still persevere. You have the good wishes and prayers in your behalf of your sister churches. May God smile upon you, and send you prosperity. May he abundantly reward 'all your patience of faith and labour of love,' and cause this day to be remembered with devout gratitude, by you and

your children, not only during this pilgrimage of your probation, but in the future world of eternal recompence.

And in order to this, let me exhort you in the words of the Apostle—*Brethren, pray for us*—pray for your Pastor; let your devotions encourage him; and by your zealous and hearty co-operation, may you cause that *the word of the Lord have free course and be glorified,* around you, beyond you, and throughout the world, *even as it is amongst you.*

CHARGE.

You, my dear Sir, now fill the ministerial office; and to you the oversight of this Church and society is given.—The Ecclesiastical Council, here convened, have constituted me their organ, solemnly to enjoin on you fidelity. This charge we enforce, not by our own authority, but by the authority of our common Lord and Master. Hear it from the mouth of his inspired Apostle, "Take heed to the ministry which you have received of the Lord, that you fulfil it."

You have studied the duties of your profession, and we trust you need not be reminded of their importance. Referring you to the instructions of the Gospel for the motives, under the influence of which, these duties should be performed, and to its examples for their illustrations permit me to exhort you to vigilant endeavours to imbue your own mind with the spirit of the Divine Author of our religion, to implant Christian principles in your heart, and to form a sacred resolution, honourably to support your professional character, and faithfully, and as far as in your power, acceptably to execute the labours of a minister.—This is essential to the salvation of your own soul, and is necessary to the success of your ministry.

Your situation as a clergyman is favourable for chris-

tian improvement. You labour exclusively in the moral kingdom of God. In other professions and pursuits, bodily wants and worldly interests are principally concerned, but *mind* is the exclusive object of the minister of the Gospel. Other men labour for the conveniences and comforts of a momentary existence; you labour to excite in your fellow men the love of truth, and the pursuit of virtue, and to confirm in them the hope of life eternal. Your stated business directly tends to the cultivation of your intellectual powers, and the improvement of your moral affections. In other professions, a man may become eminent without the peculiar attainments of the disciple of Jesus; but the better the minister is informed, the more enlightened is the christian; the more faithful the minister, the more perfect the man All men are under obligation to walk worthily of their christian vocation, but the minister is set apart to be an example to believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

While a leader then in public offices of devotion, shall your own heart be undevout? While inculcating precepts of charity and beneficence, shall not the kindly affections be cherished in your own breast? While you daily exhort your fellow men to prepare for death, judgment, and eternity, will you not for yourself estimate the worth of endless happiness, and with all your powers aspire after the employments and joys of Heaven? Take care that the moral tendency of your profession be not counteracted by unhallowed passions, or worldly interests. Take care that the reiteration of religious services do not degenerate into a mere form, blunt your moral sensibility, and harden your mind to impressions of piety. Take heed, lest by any means, when you have preached to others, you yourself should be a castaway.

The ecclesiastical state of our country powerfully enforces the obligation of a minister to fill up the measure of pastoral duty. In a past century the order of the priesthood was holden in high veneration, and the authority and influences of the clergy were controlling; even where the clerical character was not deemed indelible, nor the profession a panoply for gross immorality, the cloth did cover a multitude of weaknesses. Through New England, at least, Protestant Dissenters were with few exceptions of one denomination, and withdrawing from the predominant sect was considered as a fall but little less heinous than apostacy from Christianity. Under these circumstances, the ministry was supported by public sentiment, the ministerial career was comparatively easy, and ordinary prudence support-the pastoral relation.

Times are changed; and the situation of ministers is changed with them. Though the order is still acknowledged to be important to the best interests of society, yet respect is now paid to the man, instead of the minister, in a much higher degree than formerly. The clerical profession with us is no cover for weakness, levity, or imprudence. Religious freedom is enjoyed in our land, and all denominations of Christians are placed in a state of perfect equality. The age is inquisitive, the spirit of inquiry is carried into subjects of religion, and no system of doctrine can stand merely on the basis of human authority. Every opinion will be brought to the test of reason and scripture.

The peculiar circumstances attending the present state of the Christian ministry need not be regretted, but should furnish motives for strenuous effort; and the purpose of the above remarks, my brother, is the more deeply to impress on your mind the importance of honourably supporting the appropriate character of a

minister of the Gospel, and of performing with efficacy the duties of the pastoral office. The bulwarks erected by civil government for the defence of the clerical order are removed from you. You must stand on your own individual responsibility; and, as it respects human means, the accomplishment of the design of the Christian ministry, in this society, is in a high degree suspended on your personal character, on your exemplary conduct, and on the intelligent, serious, and acceptable manner in which you perform the public duties of your profession.

In your situation, ordinary vigilance and exertion will not be accepted. Every deficiency and defect will be pointedly noticed, and some may think you their enemy because you tell them the truth. Embody then our religion in your life, and give it, in view of all around you, a visible form. The unobtrusive example of the pious and benevolent minister addresses the people of his charge with persuasive eloquence; and the clerical character consistently supported, and the habitual exemplification of Christian virtues and graces, will eventually secure general respect and esteem. How bitter would be the regret, should the sublime cause, to which you have devoted yourself, suffer through your deficiency! Whether your ministry shall prove successful, depends in a great measure on the wisdom and propriety of your life and conversation. Even suspicion that you are destitute of professional information, or are in moral character defective, would to you be fatal. If you lose the confidence of your own flock, you will lose the power to do them good. Should your character in common estimation become tarnished, your public usefulness will come to an end. Will the consequent mortification be compensated by any gratification to be enjoyed from the indulgence of an indolent mind, or a participation

in the empty amusements of the world? But, beloved brother, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.

Our religion furnishes motives to fortify your resolution, to animate your diligence, and enliven your zeal, even in a situation which will require in an unusual degree strenuous and unwearied exertions. You can expect comparatively little aid from your ministerial brethren. An independent spirit must be your support; and you must depend on the resources of your own mind. Be not discouraged. Reflect on the privations and dangers which the apostles of our Lord encountered when they went forth to preach the Gospel. None of their sufferings moved them; nor did they count their lives dear unto themselves, so they might finish their course with joy, and the ministry which they received of the Lord Jesus to testify the Gospel of the grace of God. Consider that Jesus himself, in submission to the will of his Father, endured the cross, and despised the shame. Remember the divine promises: "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness,"—"They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they who turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever."

Covet then earnestly the best gifts. Take heed to thyself. Give thyself to reading and to prayer. Do the work of an evangelist. Fulfil thy ministry.

In doing this, thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP.

The day on which a young man is consecrated to the work of the christian ministry, is a day of interesting associations, of many hopes, and many anxieties. In the freshness of opening life, he comes willingly to the altar of God, and offers there, not the gifts of providence, not the service of an hour, but the labour of his whole earthly being; he offers himself, both body and soul, to the cause of heaven. The occasion awakens in the minds of those, who have already given themselves to the pastoral office, remembrances of a solemn and tender nature. The day is a day of sympathy, of natural and religious sympathy. The scenes of a former time rush to mind, when they too went in the strength of christian faith, and made their vows of holy service. The feelings of that period come back, when the heart was full to overflowing, and the experience of the hours since that period comes with them, to tell that the apprehensions of the spirit were not groundless, that the ministry of the gospel of Christ is not an idle charge. The path on which a new brother cheerfully enters, has been found by those who have preceded him, to be a straight and narrow way, in which many difficulties must be surmounted, and constant vigilance be

exercised. They therefore, while they exhort him to be faithful to his trust, and set before him the duties that he is required to discharge, withhold not the expression of their joy and sympathy; their joy, that he has undertaken an honourable and glorious work, their sympathy in his future trials. They are incited to this office of kindness, not merely by the feelings of natural association, but by the spirit of christianity, and the example of its first teachers. Our religion is an affectionate religion, and in this respect, as well as in its spiritual character, is distinguished from all other systems of faith and practice; and so far as any form of doctrine or conduct, breathes not the spirit of love, it deviates from pure christianity. St. Paul, in vindicating his apostolic character to the Galatians, tells them among the circumstances of his commission, that he received the right hand of fellowship from the other apostles. When they had determined the sphere of their respective labours, when he and Barnabas were appointed to go unto the heathen, while James, and Peter, and John went unto the circumcision, they gave each other the right hand of fellowship. It was a symbol of their mutual relation, their equal authority, and their common affection. It was a pledge of their future remembrance, and perpetual union. They were on the eve of separation. A life of toil and danger lay before them; the world was their field of exertion. They knew not that they should ever again meet on earth. They were bound together by the ties of faith and suffering, and these ties required them to part. At such a moment, with how much fervour must that pledge of fidelity to each other, and to their Master, have been exchanged. It was not an unmeaning ceremony. It was the grasp of fraternal and christian affection, of men of strong minds and warm hearts bidding each other farewel on the en-

trance of a journey through persecution and distress; of fellow disciples going to spread a new religion through the earth, who might never be animated by each other's presence, till they received the reward of their labours in heaven.

The ministers of the gospel have not now the same painful anticipations, which were shared by its early teachers. But they have much to endure, and much to effect; and the simple ceremony, which the apostles adopted, still retains its meaning as an expression of feelings springing from our nature and sanctioned by our religion. And in accordance with the custom of our churches, I now, in behalf of myself and others, offer this pledge of congratulation and sympathy. My brother, I give you the right hand of fellowship. Its meaning you will not question; its sincerity you will not doubt. In the name of this council of pastors and delegates, I salute you as a regularly ordained minister of the gospel of Christ, and declare to this assembly, and to all men, that you are in our view fully constituted a bishop in the church of the Lord. You are clothed with an office of great importance and responsibleness. By the prayer of consecration and the imposition of hands you have been separated to peculiar duties and privileges. To these duties I welcome you, not because they are arduous, but because they are holy and honourable. You will labour in the cause of God and of his son Jesus Christ. You will be united with God our father in the salvation of men; his grace will assist you, and by you will his grace be dispensed. You will follow the steps of the Lord Jesus; you have the same end in view for which he taught, suffered, and died. As an ambassador for God in Christ's stead you will stand in this house. It is an honourable office. The faithful, consistent, Christian minister, let him be in poverty or obscurity,

in suffering or persecution, is in the employment of heaven; and what higher station could he demand. You will minister, not in carnal, but in spiritual things. It will be your aim to pour light into the darkened mind, and consolation into the wounded heart; to give hope to the desponding, confidence to the humble, and peace to the dying. The mourner will rest on you for support, and you must point him to the christian's Father, and to the christian's home. The doubting will come to you for instruction, and you must unfold to him the truths of our religion. The sick will call on you for prayers, and you must teach him to ask in faith and submission. You will watch the departing of the spirit, and let it ascend to heaven in the incense of your devotion. Such are the least painful duties to which you will be summoned. It is not becoming in me to urge these or other labours upon you: you have been solemnly charged to exhort, admonish, and edify by word and by example. I would name these services that I may encourage you in view of them; for they carry their reward with them. In the gratitude of those whom you benefit, in the love of those whom you serve, in the improvement of those whom you teach, you will find ample compensation for all your perseverance; you will enjoy the confidence of many hearts; you will share in the joys as well as the sorrows of many families; you will be the friend as well as the minister: chambers will be cordially opened to you which affliction has closed to all others; the eye of the sufferer will brighten at your entrance; many souls which God alone has searched, will be revealed to you; much genuine goodness, much fervent piety which the world sees not will be discovered by you: and after a day spent in the communion of other minds, when you have witnessed all varieties of situation, and have been called at one moment to rejoice with

those that rejoice, and at another to weep with those that weep, you will find in the evening meditation of your own thoughts a satisfaction that will far outweigh fatigue, and drive away despondency. To such privileges, to such joys, which none but a devoted minister can taste, I welcome you. I know that you will need them, and will value them. I welcome you, my brother, to a life of trial, and of reward. I would not that you should think it an easy task to minister at the christian altar; the fire must be watched day and night. The end of your exertions is the salvation of men, and this, you believe, is not a light matter. It demands a persevering faith, a zealous piety, a constant self-denial, a devotion of heart, and soul, and life, to one absorbing interest. If you would be happy and blessed in your ministry, you must have a spirit which no difficulties can overcome, unbending as God's truth, and active as God's providence. Your situation is peculiar: you will have not only the usual trials of a minister's life, but many arising from your place in this city, surrounded by those who are warmly and conscientiously opposed to your faith, and separated from the intercourse of those who, with you, believe Unitarian christianity to be the religion of the gospel. Your ministerial duties will be heavier, your language will be more liable to misrepresentation, and your conduct will be more strictly watched than those of most of your brethren. But you have also the conviction, founded on the study of the Bible, that you hold the truth, and the confidence, resting on the character of God, that the truth shall prevail. You have the example of other pastors who gave themselves to the cause of a pure faith in like circumstances, and who have seen that faith making sure progress, and spreading its light through the clouds of prejudice and opposition, and who now look with confidence rather

than anxiety to its universal diffusion. It must be so here, unless the providence of God, which once permitted the darkness of error to exclude the religion of Jesus from almost every spot on the earth, should still delay the time, when that religion shall be recognised at once in its purity and simplicity. My brother, you can employ one argument, which, in itself, is able to vanquish the prejudices of men, and, without which, controversy can effect little. You can exercise the irresistible eloquence of goodness. A holy, humble, and charitable life is a testimony in your favour which must silence and convince your adversaries. They may deny your sincerity, may charge you with religious indifference, may call you unbeliever, but let your answer be, "I will show my faith by my works;" and though the bigoted may shut their eyes to the evidence, the community will judge the tree by its fruits. Be not disheartened by the troubles which you may meet in the very entrance of your work. The burthen of cares and duties will be heaviest at first; a scholar's life is not adapted to fit one for the perplexities of the ministry. You are thrown at once from the bosom of home, and the seclusion of study, into the new relations of the pastoral office. If you are too sanguine, you must bear disappointment; if you despond, you will destroy the energy that will be needed. Be of good courage. You are young; so was Timothy when he received the injunction, let no man despise thy youth. You will be alone; so was Paul when standing on Mars' hill, he spake as the servant of the one living God. Look at the saints of former times; remember those who, in these latter days, have endured much, and resigned much for the interests of pure christianity. Faith, hope, and charity, these, my brother, are the three great virtues of the christian character, and are they not sufficient for the severest trials? What difficulties shall

not faith surmount? Our Saviour has said, nothing is impossible. What gloom shall not hope convert into brightness? What enemy shall not charity soften, if it cannot subdue? Did I just say you had left the bosom of home? You are cast into the midst of friends. You have forsaken your father's house at the call of duty, and this people have opened their arms to you. The protectors of your youth are far from you, but the associates of your manhood are gathering themselves around you. Your brethren in the ministry, who will rejoice in your success, are distant from you; none will be here to encourage you by their aid and counsel, but you will not be forgotten. Many remembrances and many hopes will rest upon you. Our prayers will be offered to heaven for your welfare; our sympathy will be given you in trial and in success. Your name will be on our lips, and though we may seldom exchange this pledge of union, our thoughts, our solicitude, our hearts will be with you. We claim no authority over you. Never may we violate the principles which we assert, the independence of churches, the rights of conscience, and the freedom of private judgment. The hand of fellowship shall always be the hand of help, but God forbid, that it should ever be the hand of tyranny. If you reciprocate the feelings, which, in the name of this council, and of the portion of christians which they represent, I have expressed, let me ask of you a similar pledge of love and remembrance.

My friend and brother; I have spoken for others; I scarce dare to speak for myself. This is not a suitable place for the exhibition of private emotions, but propriety does not forbid, and our past friendship demands, that I should once more proffer you this hand. I give it to you as the hand of one who has known your struggles, who confides in your character, and

who most truly wishes you success. I had indulged the hope that we should not be thus separated, that as we had passed the years of our youthful studies together, we might assist each other in our active duties. The Providence of God has disappointed these hopes. He has placed you in a sphere of great usefulness. Look up; the field is one of immense extent and promise. Enter upon your labour cheerfully; enter upon it with christian resolution. We are united my friend, in the same undertaking. A few months only have elapsed, since I received the solemn charge which has this day been imposed upon you. The feelings of that time are still fresh; they are recalled in fulness by the services of your ordination. We have known each other's sentiments, doubts, and hopes. Let us pursue the same course of zealous duty, and though we may seldom meet in this world, we shall be prepared for a happy union in eternity. Go on then, my brother; and God's blessing go with you. May you be happy in the approbation of a good conscience. May you rejoice in a successful ministry. May you be blessed with your people's love. May the aged receive you as a friend who will uphold their trembling steps; may the young cluster around you as the guide to their inexperienced feet. You have given your youth to God, may he give you many days of health, and an old age of honour. And may you then be rich in the affections of those, whose infant minds you formed to piety. May you descend to a grave hallowed by many tears. May your memory be that of the just, and your portion be God's love for ever.

To this Society, we present our sincere and hearty congratulations. We rejoice with you christian friends, in the promises of this day. You have struggled through much embarrassment and obloquy. You have sur-

mounted difficulties that would have broken a less determined spirit. You have now found one who is ready to devote himself to your good, and tearing himself from the scenes of education, of domestic affection, and of early habits, to intrust his happiness to your hands. You will therefore receive him with no little kindness, and while he deserves your approbation, you will continue to him the expressions of your gratitude. He will look to you for assistance, for indulgence, and for affection. Let him not look in vain. Should he err, remember his youth, and his perplexities. Do not demand of him more than he can perform. Do not burthen him with duties, which, from his age and situation, it is impossible that he should discharge. Give him your entire confidence. He has shewn that he seeks not ease nor wealth, but usefulness, and that he may be useful to you, he must know your characters. Listen to his instructions; attend upon them, and let him see that you are interested by them. Let not the fervour of your zeal abate, when the excitement of this occasion shall subside. Be not wise merely in the things of controversy, and oh! do not cherish the spirit of party. It is at best an enemy forced to fight on the side of christianity. It is not the spirit of our religion, for the one is mild and charitable, the other is proud and selfish. You justly glory in the distinctions of being Unitarians, but it is a nobler privilege to be christians. Do not forget the greater in the less. The success of your minister, as well as of the doctrines which he maintains, will depend very much on your co-operation with him, by illustrating his instructions in your lives. Nothing will tend more to discourage him than your negligence. Nothing will be a better comment on his preaching than your holiness. His exertions will be confined to you and your families. He will be deprived of the religious

sympathy, and in a great degree, of the social intercourse of others, while your secular and domestic relations will bring you into constant collision with the community about you. On them you may exert a powerful influence. By the language of your daily conduct, by the testimony of your blameless lives, you may win many to the profession of a faith which produces such virtues. Your minister will thus, by enkindling in you the graces of the christian character, save his own soul, have you for the crown of his rejoicing, and be a means of spreading pure and undefiled religion throughout the land. Brethren, to you, under the providence and grace of God, we commend him. His happiness he has linked with yours; his joy must be your joy, his sorrow must be your sorrow. The progress of truth here, as elsewhere, must be gradual; and it will be pursuing its silent course in the minds of men, when you may think that it is sleeping. Let your youthful pastor find from you counsel, aid, confidence, sympathy, and love. We do not distrust the sincerity of your hearts, nor do we believe, that the promises of this day shall deceive us. The perseverance and union which have distinguished you under circumstances of peculiar trial, give the assurance of your future success. The first day of toil is over. The morning of a brighter has burst upon you: may it never be darkened by the mists of passion or variance. Be at peace among yourselves, and the clouds of persecution shall in vain obscure your name. They shall be converted into the splendid attendants of its progress, as its goes forth subduing, cheering, and enlightening. Peace be to this house. For our brethren and companions' sake, we say, peace be within its walls. And when they shall have crumbled into dust, may its worshippers be found united in a more glorious, even a heavenly temple.

H. Ware Jr to John Ware

THE COMBINATION AGAINST INTEMPERANCE

EXPLAINED AND JUSTIFIED.

AN

ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE CAMBRIDGE TEMPERANCE SOCIETY,

MARCH 27, 1832.

By HENRY WARE, Jr.,

Professor of Pulpit Eloquence and the Pastoral Care in Harvard University.

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ADDRESS.

I APPEAR before you this evening in the name of the *Cambridge Temperance Society*, which now makes its first appeal to this community. I feel it a privilege to be its organ. There is no cause I could more heartily advocate; and there is no place in which I could so cheerfully do it, as in this, — the place where my early youth worshipped, and amongst my early friends. In attempting to say what may be most suitable to the occasion, I shall make it my single object to state the considerations which lead us to join in the general combination against intemperance, which is forming throughout the land, — I may say, throughout the world; considerations which seem to make it the duty of every good citizen, as well as every sincere Christian, to lend his name and his influence to the cause. To this end I shall endeavour to explain the necessity of such a combination, to show its nature and character, and to point out the results at which it aims.

I. *That this combination is necessary* will appear from a slight glance at the nature and extent of the evil, the insufficiency of all previous measures for its removal, and the success which has thus far attended the present operation.

Of the nature and extent of the evil in question it cannot be needful to speak at large. They have been so fully and frequently exposed, that no one can be ignorant of them. It will be enough to refresh your minds by a rapid recapitulation.

Recollect then what it is to be the subject of strong drink. Contemplate the picture of some miserable man

who lives in bondage to his bottle; and observe what a loathsome object he is; — squalid, bloated, diseased, — offensive in his whole appearance, — incapable of communicating happiness, — the derision of boys, — the terror and shame of his weeping, impoverished wife, — the scorn and ruin of his unhappy children, — the nuisance of his neighbourhood. In a word, bring vividly before you the image of some one of these degraded creatures, of whom, alas, you have all known but too many.

Then recollect that to this beast-like condition have been reduced multitudes of every class and rank in society; — not only the children of the dissolute and depraved, enticed by early example; — not only the sons of ignorance and infamy, brought up by vagabond parents to be like themselves; — but sons and daughters of the virtuous and pure, who began life in loveliness and hope, whose early promise was the pride and joy of parental affection, have been seduced, they know not how, till their loveliness and honor have faded, and their parents' hearts have been broken, and they have died like the beasts that perish.

Consider that these victims, thus corrupted and destroyed, of all ages and both sexes and every profession, — for even the senate, the bench, and the pulpit, have not escaped; mothers and daughters have been snared; the youngest children and the hoariest old men have been drawn into the fearful company; the rich and the poor, who met no where else, have met here; and the learned and the illiterate, the refined and the vulgar, who had no other common ground, have found one here; — consider, I say, that all these have been beguiled into it involuntarily, unintentionally, through the insidious, false pretence, that to drink a little was either indispensable for health, labor, or good fellowship, or at any rate was innocent and safe.

Recollect that the number of those, who die annually in the United States in this dreadful ruin of body and soul, has been estimated, on the most reasonable calculations, to be at least thirty thousand, or, according to others, five hundred a week, and two murders; that four fifths of all the

paupers, that two thirds of all the imprisoned debtors, that more than half of all the lunatics and maniacs, that three fourths of all the criminals, are the direct, well ascertained consequence of intemperance : — that therefore we may say of the greater part of our prisons, almshouses, and lunatic asylums, they are necessary only because of the prevalent intemperance ; they serve to balance the distilleries and dram-shops ; and the whole burden of their expense on public and private charity, is a tax on the sober and industrious for the accommodation of the idle and profligate.

Recollect what is the amount of the entire loss to the country from this cause, as calculated from authentic data by one of the judges of the United States' Court ; an annual loss to the country, as he states it, of the enormous sum of ninety-four millions of dollars ; "more than sufficient to buy up all the houses, lands, and slaves in the United States once in every twenty years."

Recollect that there is scarcely a village, in which the cost of the ardent spirits annually used, has not been more than enough to pay all the taxes, which go to support the ministry and schools and highways.

Recollect that this state of things has been perpetuated by the existence of a class of men, who thrive and grow rich on this general ruin ; a class so numerous as to furnish a grog-shop for every twenty-one inhabitants, and distilleries, which, in 1815, amounted to forty thousand.

Things being in this condition, was it not necessary that something should be done ? Was it possible that those, who discerned the appalling extent of the evil, could be satisfied to sit still and see the devastation move on, without devising some means to stay its horrible progress ? When they witnessed the debasement and woe of some miserable wretch in their own vicinity, and reflected that there was an army of such beings in the land, as numerous as that which Napoleon led to Russia ; when they thought of the crowds of weeping, heart-broken friends who attended them ; when they beheld the haggard company of the ma-

niacs, the paupers, the idiots, and the criminals; and considered that the property squandered to create all this misery, exceeded in amount all that was paid for all public purposes; could they do less than say, *Something must be done*?

What should it be? The minds of observing and Christian men were long ago agitated on this question. Inquiries were instituted, addresses were delivered, the press was made eloquent, the law was made to operate. Gradually an impression was made. There were those who understood the needlessness and mischief of all use of intoxicating liquors; and many years since, families lived, and farms were carried on, and ships were navigated without them. But the public sentiment still pleaded for a little indulgence, and for a long time the friends of temperance thought it allowable. And even after the truth became established, that there was no hope but in total abstinence, the reform moved slowly for want of concert. At length A COMBINATION was perceived to be the thing, and the only thing necessary. Every step had been taken but this. Every step seemed to prepare for this. This was called for; it came into action; it gathered numbers; it extended itself wide.

And what has been the result? A perceptible and almost universal change in the customs of society meets us every where; — in our own houses, in the social habits of our neighbourhood, in the common opinion respecting what is hospitable and kind. Rum and brandy are no longer a common refreshment for friends, nor indispensable to a training, a committee meeting, or a law-suit. The traveller through the country remarks the change every where; and the philanthropist and patriot speak of it in almost unmeasured terms of gratulation and joy.

It is nearly a year since it was ascertained, that through these united bands, more than a million persons had given up the use of ardent spirits; more than three thousand dealers had abandoned the traffic; more than three thousand drunkards had been known to be reformed; and more

than a thousand distilleries had been stopped.* These numbers have been increased since.

From these few facts, of whose truth we may judge something from what we ourselves have witnessed, it may be perceived what efficiency there is in the present movement, what assurance that we are in the right course, and what encouragement to persevere.

All this goes to prove incontestably my first position, that this combination is necessary. Every thing else had been tried. For twenty years, men of every class, — statesmen, lawyers, laborers, physicians, and divines, — had been acting on the subject, and individuals in every part of the land had experimentally settled every important principle which is now acted upon. But for want of concentration their efforts and example were of limited effect. It was needful to unite them. This has been partially done, and the consequences prove it to be a wise measure. Let it be done completely; let the sober friends of man join together in one band, and act with one mind, and nothing can stand against them.

II. But before they will do this, it is necessary that they understand *the nature of this combination.* Are the terms of it such as they can reasonably assent to?

It is not to be concealed, that many excellent persons object, in the outset, against the very principle of association, as being of questionable propriety and expediency, to say the least, and attended with hazards so momentous as to make it their duty to withhold their countenance from them. I do not mean to argue with such persons. I address only those who think differently; who think that in this, as in many other cases of moral duty, some perils must be hazarded for the sake of a great and unquestionable good. In the present instance, the benefits are too vast, the efficacy too certain, the operation too imperiously demanded, to allow a moment's hesitation. All the attendant evil becomes theo-

* These statements, from the Report of the American Temperance Society, are made in *round numbers*, and are probably to be taken as only an approximation to the truth.

retical and trivial by the side of the palpable and inestimable good.

What then are the terms of the present combination?

The principle, on which this present action is grounded, is that of total abstinence from the use of ardent spirits, to which it requires that the members of the association bind themselves by express agreement. Here then are two things; the *principle* and the *pledge*. Is there reasonable objection to either?

To the *principle* certainly there can be none. No one, who knows any thing of the nature of the evil in question, will dream of finding a remedy in any thing short of the absolute prohibition of the intoxicating article. All experience proves, that no man can be accounted safe who allows himself to drink moderately. Dr. Johnson once said, "I know what intemperance is, and I know what is abstinence; but I never yet could learn what is moderation." Thousands may say the same. They can abstain; but they cannot drink moderately. In abstinence there is no difficulty, comparatively no self-denial, and there is safety. But to drink a little, and stop as soon as the appetite is provoked; to deny an increasing gratification to a growing thirst; this is, for many men, too hard; and to all it is fearfully dangerous. There is no safety but in resolute abstinence. What objection then can there be to the principle? Especially since it is one of the demonstrated truths, that not a drop is *needed* by any man in any circumstances, and that in most cases it is actually deleterious. How indeed should it be necessary, when the world went on till within three hundred years without the invention of ardent spirit? and its use has been common in New England less than ninety years.

But it is not only this personal consideration which justifies the principle. Every man must recollect his relation to others. Howeyer impossible that he should fall, he must consider, that it may be essential to the very salvation of some weaker neighbour that he altogether abstain. But he sees you take *a little*. Why should not he? It is as inno-

cent in him as in you; and he is ashamed to betray a greater distrust of his own virtue than you of yours. If you risk it, he will; if you brave the devil, he will not be so cowardly as to retreat. Shall he alone turn poltroon, and run away from a seasonable glass? Not he; and so, for fear of being thought to think himself in danger, he drinks on and dies. Now, what right had you to countenance and abet the ruin of that man? What right had you, by a foolish and unnecessary gratification, to tempt him to sin and destruction? Remember the magnanimous declaration of Paul: "If meat cause my brother to offend, I will eat no meat while the world standeth, lest I cause my brother to offend." This should be the maxim of every man; and there can be no doubt, that if the strong would all act on this principle, they would confirm the moral courage and strengthen the moral efforts of thousands, who would otherwise be lost. For how many thousands are there, who have no strength to run counter to example!

Indeed it will not do to give up this principle of entire abstinence. It is the corner-stone of the cause. On it rests all the success in which we rejoice. Abandon it, — allow men to drink moderately, and to judge for themselves, as you must, what is moderate drinking, and you restore the dominion of the demon at once.

But the *pledge*, — is that necessary? is that expedient?

On this point, I am aware, there is greater difference of opinion. Many of the true friends to the cause, advocates of the great principle, hesitate about the pledge. I know their objections, conscientiously and religiously entertained. They are to be treated with all respect. But after the most careful consideration I have been able to give the subject, I am constrained to say, that I think them founded in error, and such as offer no sufficient reason for refusing to join the combination.

The error seems to me twofold: first, in supposing that the pledge is always designed for his sake who takes it, whereas it is often intended chiefly for the sake of others; and, secondly, in fancying that it contains a snare to his conscience by inducing him to act from unworthy motives.

First, these persons say, We do not use these injurious articles. Why is not this enough? Why pledge ourselves to that restraint which we already practise?

I answer, For the sake of others, for the sake of extending the knowledge and influence of your example. There is a large class of men almost persuaded, who think on the whole it would be better to abandon the cup altogether, who yet continue to drink habitually, though soberly, and who thus encourage the intemperate, because they are not called to make an immediate decision. Your private example does not urge them to it any more to-day than next year; and they think that next year will be more convenient. But when you sign a paper, and pass it to them, they are brought to a decision on the spot. And it is precisely in this way, that thousands, without a moment's hesitation, have been made practical advocates of the cause. They were advocates *at heart* before; yet they might never have become such openly, so as to exert a wholesome influence, except they had thus been called on for an immediate decision. In this way, therefore, your written engagement may make your practice known to many, and thus tend to influence many, who never would otherwise have learned what your practice is.

But again they say, We lay snares for conscience in thus surrendering our liberty. We do not think a little occasional indulgence injurious to us, though we do not desire it; and why should we tempt ourselves by the prohibition?

It is not strange that some should be affected by this mode of viewing the matter. They religiously dread to tamper with conscience, and put its delicacy in jeopardy. But, after all, are they not mistaken as to the amount of the risk? If they are accustomed to act on principle, is there much danger that appetite or civility will get ascendency over it, because they have told their neighbours that it shall not? — for this is the amount of it. Or, suppose it amounted to something more; yet should they not be ready to incur the risk for the sake of the good which they may thus do to others? for this is the point to be considered. It is a ques-

tion between a single regard to one's own good, and a benevolent sacrifice to the good of others. On the one side is a possible evil to one's self; on the other, an inevitable evil to others. Which is to be chosen? To a conscientious man, who walks circumspectly, the personal danger is nothing; and he certainly cannot feel justified in refusing to do what might prove an essential office of benevolence, on the selfish plea that possibly he might thereby injure his own mind. The duty then seems obvious. It is determined by the maxim of holy writ, "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's good;" and by that already cited; "I will eat no meat while the world standeth, lest I cause my brother to offend."

I would ask also, why this objection should be thought so peculiarly strong in this case, when it is equally applicable to many other occasions, on which it is never brought forward? "We are principled against making promises to do our duty; we choose to do it because it is our duty; otherwise we set snares for our consciences." But you do not act on this principle in other cases. It is your duty to speak the truth in a court of justice; yet you make a solemn engagement to do so. It is your duty to pay your debts; yet you do not hesitate to give a note of hand, promising payment. It is your duty to be faithful to your wife; yet you did not refuse, when you took her for better for worse, to engage to be so. And did you ever find yourself less likely to speak the truth, pay your debts, and honor your wife, because of these promises? Have you found them snares to your conscience? Certainly then there is no force in the objection. It cannot stand before a candid examination.

It is to be said further, in defence of this requisition, that experience has proved it essential to the prevalence of the cause; we can expect its complete triumph only through the power, which is by this means imparted to its operations. It is undoubtedly a fact, that the vigorous and rapid spread of just sentiments on this subject has been mainly owing to their having been pressed upon the notice of society by the

steady and persevering pledge of temperate men. It is through this means, that such multitudes have been led, not only to reflect, but to act, to act promptly, decidedly, fearlessly, unitedly ; and if the former course of simply reasoning on the subject, and acting silently as insulated individuals, had been continued, nothing approaching the same results could have been witnessed, nor could we now look forward with so confident assurance to complete success. Whatever objection, therefore, may seem to lie against this part of the system, a little examination shows it to be unfounded ; while to admit it in practice would be ruinous to the enterprise. No ; so long as we require our magistrates to bind themselves to fidelity in office, we must not think it unreasonable to bind ourselves to this duty. If every sober man would do it, not all the obligation, assumed and discharged by the officers of state, would effect so much for the virtue and prosperity of the nation. We should then speedily witness the results at which we aim.

III. *What are these results ?* This was the third point I proposed to consider.

The result to which these operations tend is the extermination, — the absolute, perpetual extermination, — of ardent spirits, as an article of drink. The cause is not gained until rum and brandy are as little used as opium, and sold in the same way, for the same purposes, and in the same places. There is no stopping short of this. Our principles look forward to this result. The work is incomplete, society is insecure, until it is reached.

It is obvious, therefore, that the principles of this combination go to discourage the manufacture of spirits, and abolish the traffic in them. He who holds them cannot consistently supply to his fellow-men the temptations and facilities to that indulgence, which he professes to esteem the source of immeasurable calamities to them. He cannot consistently labor to rid the land of intemperance, and yet make it for his own interest that men should buy at his distillery, or drink at his shop.

I am aware of the delicacy of this part of the subject. I know the risk I run of hurting the feelings of men engaged in a business, which was, when they entered it, and always hitherto has been, considered as reputable as any other; and who have not yet had the subject so presented to them, that they perceive themselves to be occupied in spreading misery and desolation around them. All their habits of education and of life, their business, their interest, and their connexions, concur to blind them, and they are not likely to discern, so readily as others, the inherent vice of their vocation. Even John Newton, for some time after his character became Christian, failed to see, that his employment in the slave-trade was in contradiction to his religious principles; and it sounds harshly to the ears of our neighbours, when it is said to them, for the first time, that the trade in rum is no better than the trade in men. Yet if we judge impartially, by the wretchedness and sin resulting from each, can we doubt that it is so?

I desire, therefore, to speak inoffensively, but I must speak decidedly. No proposition seems to me susceptible of more satisfactory demonstration than this, — and I am sure that no person can give it one hour's serious thought without assenting to it, — that, in the present state of information on this subject, no man can think to act on Christian principle, or do a patriot's duty to his country, and at the same time make or sell the instrument of intoxication.

For let him consider what it amounts to. To no less than this: employing his time, capital, and industry, to prepare for use, and offer for use, that thing, which has been proved to be the principal source of misery and crime in modern society; — providing for men the convenient and tempting means of ruining their health and their business, beggaring their families, becoming vagabonds and a nuisance while alive, sinking prematurely to a dishonorable grave, and entering eternity, — oh, with what a preparation! Let him consider this, — and he will perceive, that, however little he may have intended it, however little he may have thought of it, the nature of his calling has rendered it

inevitable. He cannot be a dealer in spirits without becoming accessory to all this vice and ruin.

He does not wish to create drunkards; he does not take pleasure in multiplying poverty, suffering, and sin; he is astonished that men can be such idiots and brutes; he wonders that they do not drink with moderation. Alas! he does not reflect that the inevitable tendency of the shop and the bar-room is to decoy men from themselves and their self-command. He does not reflect how hopeless it is, — as all experience has proved, — that such places should exist, and no men become intemperate. Their existence is certainly the occasion, if not the cause, of a vast proportion of the evil. If the poison were not freely offered for sale, it would not be purchased.

This is easily tested. How happens it that in that village there were so many neglected farms, and houses going to decay; that so many families lived in squalidness and quarrelling, and that a general want of enterprise marked its slovenly aspect? There were four places in that village, at which strong drink was retailed; and it was the custom of the villagers to assemble there and discuss the times. As a natural consequence, they became idle, shiftless, slovenly, and quarrelsome. Now suppose, that twenty years ago the town had resolved, that no retailers should be allowed there, — as has recently been done in Utica, N. Y.; — that, consequently, no spirits had, since that time, been carried there for sale. Who can deny, that the whole aspect of things would be other than it is? Who does not see, that the very persons who are now worthless sots, would have grown up a thriving, industrious population? This is the result which we wish to see accomplished throughout the community. It has already been witnessed in some places, where words have hardly power enough to express the gratitude and gladness of the people at the happy change. What hinders that the change should take place every where? What hinders that every community should be filled only with sober, thrifty, enterprising men, helping forward, instead of keeping back the general good? What

hinders? Every one must see the answer to be, *the manufacture and the sale of ardent spirit.* Let us turn the matter as we will, it comes to this at last. And until those who are most concerned in the fact see it in its true light, and become willing to sacrifice a brief present gain to the welfare of the community, the day of universal temperance with its train of blessings will be retarded in its coming. They must first lock up, — for they hold the keys, — the fountains of that desolating flood which now overflows and stagnates upon the corrupted land.

Honored be they who have done this! Honor to the names of those, — the only persons in any sense *sufferers* in this cause, — who have, with manly principle and conscientious self-denial, thrown away their gains, that their fellow-men might be safe. They already form a numerous host; every day witnesses accessions to their ranks. They are now, and from this time forth they must be, the most efficient promoters of the auspicious reformation; since each of them, not only, like the rest of us, refuses to touch the poison as it flows, but absolutely annihilates one of its streams. To these men it belongs to finish the work which others have so propitiously begun.

I have thus executed my purpose of explaining the necessity, the character, and the results of the great combination against Intemperance, in which we have enlisted.

I have but a word more to say. I simply ask of you, friends and fellow-citizens, to give the subject a fair consideration; and if, as reasonable men, as citizens, as patriots, as Christians, you feel the evil and desire its extinction, lend the power of your names to the enterprise; enlist in this crusade against the general destroyer; array yourselves under the banner of your country and your God, in this holy war of extermination against the chief public enemy. The victory will be won, — the most important and blessed victory since the Reformation of Luther, — only when every individual shall have joined our ranks, and become a free, voluntary, practical advocate of the duty of absolute absti-

nence. Much has been done already; enough to give encouragement to the most sanguine hopes; but comparatively nothing, if the effort is to be relaxed. Every thing depends on perseverance. Come up, therefore, one and all, "to the help of the Lord against the mighty." Come up, and aid in the purification and salvation of your country. The newly Christianized islands of the Pacific ocean have abolished the trade, and banished the venom from their shores. Let not our older land of boasted religious light, lag far behind. Let it rise in the power of its enlightened faith, in the fervor of its Christian love, and sweep this foul contamination from its borders. Formerly it was thought we must rely on the law to effect the Augean work. But it has been found, that there is something stronger and more to be depended on than human law, — the spread of just sentiment and upright principle. No law has a commanding power like that "written on the heart." Where this is brought into operation, aided by the authority and sanctions of the written word of God, it creates a certainty, energy, and perseverance of action, to which all other operation is feeble. Here then is our confidence. The reformation which proceeds on *principle*, is a reformation root and branch; a willing, cheerful, thorough, universal reformation; and it never goes backward. Let us therefore earnestly pray, and strenuously labor, for the spread of that moral and religious principle, which shall certainly effect, and alone is able to effect, this moral and religious Reform.

ADDRESSES

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

ASSOCIATION

FOR

RELIGIOUS IMPROVEMENT,

AT THEIR

FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD

ANNIVERSARIES.

BOSTON,

ISAAC R. BUTTS AND CO. CONGRESS STREET.

1826.

Address

DELIVERED ON

THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY.

NOV. 1823.

BY JOHN WARE, M. D.

The return of the season and of the day, when our connexion with one another as members of this Society was formed, naturally brings to our minds a variety of considerations, relating to the objects for which we were united, the principles by which we have been guided, and the success with which our labors have been attended. The occasion is one of interest and of importance. Of interest, for it cannot be otherwise than that those who have been associated together, for ever so short a period; who have been fellow-laborers, in at least an attempt to improve the moral and religious condition of themselves and others, should experience some excitement of their better and warmer feelings, when they meet at a period like this, in their progress, to look back seriously upon the past; to look forward, hopefully, to the future. Of importance; for if it is important to the individual, at the expiration of the stated divisions of time, his days, his weeks, his years, to examine faithfully into the time which has gone, and learn from the experience it affords him, lessons for that which is to come; is it not equally important, that those, whose aim it is to labor with one mind for one common object, who are even more liable than individuals, to errors of judgment, of inexperience, or of imprudence, should avail themselves of the same method of scrutinizing the faults of the past, and forming plans for the better conduct of the future?

In the task of retrospection, as our principal object is improvement and not self-gratulation, it is more important to reflect upon that which has been done amiss, than to dwell too exclusively upon that which has been done well. As for our good deeds, it is sufficient that we have done them; they have had their effect upon others and upon ourselves, and to speak of them or think of them as such, will neither tend to amend our temper or spirit, or enable us to pursue a wiser or better directed course for the future. But to examine our past actions with a view to determine wherein we might have done better, wherein we have failed from imperfections of motives, knowledge, or experience, from defects in design or management, from feebleness of resolution or fickleness of purpose; if done with a proper spirit and followed by a salutary attempt at amendment, is the surest way of teaching us at once, what is the proper measure of confidence, which we may repose in ourselves, and what the best means of enabling us to labor hereafter with a better knowledge of the nature of the objects we aim at, and better views with regard to the manner of accomplishing them.

That there have been many defects both of design and execution in the accomplishment of our object, we can none of us doubt; though we have the satisfaction to reflect, that we have intended well, and that some good has, probably, been accomplished. But it becomes all of us to reflect carefully, and observe with an unsparing fidelity, wherein, either as individuals, or as a whole, we have failed in those exertions, which were necessary to promote our common objects. It becomes us to inquire, whether we have not sometimes mingled improper motives with those which, we trust, have principally governed us; whether we have not permitted ourselves to be sometimes influenced by too worldly a spirit, or on the other hand by one which has partaken of bigotry, intolerance, or uncharitableness. Whether we have not occasionally slumbered in our undertaking, and allowed ourselves to be diverted from the principal object, to others of little or of secondary importance.

It is not my intention to dwell upon this topic, but to offer a few general remarks upon the main objects of this Association, which may perhaps lead our minds, as we proceed, to reflect upon what the experience of the past teaches us, with regard to the best means of accomplishing them in future. These objects I conceive to be two. 1st, The religious and moral im-

provement of the members themselves by mutual association; and 2d, The religious and moral improvement of the poor, and the children of the poor.

I am persuaded that much may be done, with regard to the first of these objects, by meetings like those which are contemplated by this Association, judiciously conducted. The spirit of christianity is eminently and peculiarly social and domestic. It was intended that christian, should always form one family, and consider themselves as of one kindred. "See how these christians love one another," should be the exclamation of every one who has an opportunity of witnessing christian fellowship and charity. It is not an evidence that we avail ourselves of, and profit by this social spirit, that we live in a society of christians, and are upon terms of intimacy and friendship with them. Do we associate with them as such? Have we a religious motive or object in this connexion? Is it not generally a connexion of convenience, of profit, or of pleasure? Not that this kind of converse with mankind is wrong, or in any degree injurious, if kept within proper bounds; on the contrary, I conceive it to be a means of cultivating many feelings and affections, which are essential to the character of a good man. But defect of wrong is not always right; it is not wrong to indulge in the ordinary pleasures and delights of the society of our fellow-creatures, but it *is* wrong not to do something more than this. It is wrong, if in all our intercourse with those about us, we never meet them as christians; if in all our kind and confidential communications, in all the disclosures of intimacy and friendship, which take place between man and man, we have no communications, no disclosures, on the subject of religion; if among all the discussions in which we engage, among all the various topics that are suggested by fancy, by taste, or by the love of investigating truth, we never touch on the topic which should be pre-eminently interesting; if in all the counsel that we seek, or advice that we give, with regard to the thousand conflicting interests of character, property, profession, which so deeply engage the attention of every man, we never direct our own thoughts, and those of others, to those great and momentous interests, which should be so equally the concern of us all; to that inheritance of which we may be all common partakers.

It is true that the public worship of the Sabbath, is to be

considered as of a social nature ; and in a certain extent it is so. It has great advantages over exclusively solitary and individual devotion, but still it does not effect every thing ; it is capable of being assisted, and its beneficial tendencies promoted by other means. The public exercises of religion, being engaged in at long and stated intervals, without direct participation, have, to too many persons, the aspect merely of a formal ceremony, in which they have no very immediate interest. They hardly realize that they form a constituent part of the assembly of worshippers ; they do not bring the consideration home to their own hearts, that they are themselves, or ought to be, addressing the Deity, through the lips and the words of the minister. But if the exercises of the church are followed by the private, social, and confidential meetings of a few, each one that is present at them feels necessarily, that he has personally some share in the business that is going forward ; that he is individually concerned ; and, of course, the realizing impression upon him is proportionally great.

In the interval which elapses between Sabbath and Sabbath, the subject of religion is too apt to be entirely forgotten and overlooked among the multiplicity of worldly affairs, by him who is not habitually religious. Where nothing draws his thoughts to it, but the recurrence of weekly preaching, it is too apt to become a mere Sunday religion with him, which he puts on and off with the garments in which he frequents the church. He whose religion is only associated with the idea of sermons and preaching, is very apt to have the morality which it inculcates, sit but loosely on him, and to forget in the transactions and perplexities of business, those precepts which, depending upon religion for their obligation, are associated with it in the mind, and come into view only in connexion with it. Hence arises one important object of the meetings of which I speak ; by being voluntary, they are a kind of tacit acknowledgment, by the individual, that he feels the obligations of a christian ; he is regularly reminded of this obligation, by their recurrence ; and may find in them a means of renewing in his mind, as he proceeds, the motives by which he is actuated in his endeavours for improvement, of refreshing his spiritual strength, and arming him with new resolution. To him whose religious character has yet to be formed, who has just begun his race, who is new to the labour, these remarks peculiarly apply ; he

has need of constant excitement, lest he should flag in his course; the truly pious and devout man can better dispense with any but the regular ministrations, because his life is a constant tribute of praise, and his religion forms the pervading principle of his conduct, and gives the prevailing tincture and character to his thoughts and his actions.

Another advantage is, that a man gives a sort of pledge to those with whom he is associated in this way, that his conduct shall be influenced by religious motives and considerations. He takes on himself a certain degree of responsibility; he engages to devote at least some portion of his time and attention to the subject of religion. This circumstance must and will have some considerable influence. Men are more operated upon by considerations of this kind, than they are aware; and it is obvious that they can have no effect upon one who merely attends public worship. Attendance upon the Sabbath may be only a compliance with the usages of the society in which a man lives. By this attendance, we make no profession, we give no pledge, we incur no responsibility. No one feels himself any more obliged to conform to the dictates of religion, because he has been in the habit of attending public worship on Sunday, or because he is a member of any religious congregation; but I think almost any man would feel himself called upon to do it, at least in outward show, if he had joined himself to an association like this.

But how are these meetings to be managed? What is meant by having them judiciously conducted? What are to be the precise duties in which they are to be occupied? The consideration of these questions would lead us far beyond the limits which this occasion will allow. In a few words, however, it may be said, that they ought not to be occupied in sharp and vehement discussions upon controverted points, or in warm invectives on opposing sects; that they ought not to be considered as affording an opportunity for the display of learning or acuteness, or a field for emulation in argument or eloquence; and they ought not to be made an occasion for that fruitless, empty sort of conversation, which is as likely to be held on religion as upon any other subject. But since their object is excitement and improvement, they should be spent partly in devotion, partly in the serious consideration of religious subjects, partly in the social interchange of sentiments upon important

topics, connected with religion and morality. There should be on the one hand neither gloom nor austerity, nor on the other, trifling nor frivolity. The objects of consideration should be definite and distinct, or the minds of those engaged will ramble unprofitably; but there should still be sufficient scope for free and open conversation, or there will be danger of a termination in the subtilties of close and pointed argument.

With regard to the second object of this Association, the Religious Instruction of the Poor, though a less direct, it is in itself a not less important one than the first. We have endeavoured to accomplish this purpose, first, by religious instruction addressed directly to the poor themselves in the form of lectures, and secondly by the education of their children in Sabbath Schools.

As to the first, I believe that there is no way in which the lower classes of society can be so easily excited to attention to religious subjects as this. They do not attend with regularity upon the stated exercises of the Sabbath, from a variety of causes; but they will seek, and that with eagerness, those occasional religious exercises, in which from the time, the place, or the audience, there are more circumstances to rouse and excite them, than are to be found in the steady sobriety of regular services. They love the excitement of an evening and a crowded meeting, they are warmed by the fervor of an extemporaneous discourse, they are influenced by addresses to their feelings, more than to their reason, and may be brought to a sense of what they owe themselves and their Creator, by impassioned eloquence, when argument would avail but little.

And shall we not avail ourselves, in attempting the reformation of mankind, of those means which are best suited to every capacity? If the uncultivated mind can be wrought upon to good, through its very weakness, how much greater is the triumph, than where all the aids of reason, and learning, and rhetoric, are called in to the victory. The minds of all men are not framed alike. You may persuade one man through his pride, and another through his humility;—one man through his strength, and another through his weakness;—one man through his imagination and another through his reason;—one through his knowledge and another through his ignorance, and yet arrive at the same result in all. The motives which we urge upon men, must be accommodated to their temper, character, and disposition; the time, manner, and place must be arranged

with a view to take advantage of every circumstance, which may tend to excite or influence the mind.

I know of the objections that are urged by many, against any religious meetings, except those on the Lord's day; but I conceive that they are urged, either by those who know and feel a security in their religious characters, which assures them that they need no assistance of this sort, but who are so ignorant of the wants of others, as to imagine that they too could derive no benefit from them; or by those who are indisposed, from indifference or something worse, to make any exertions for their own improvement, and love to throw impediments, as if there were a sort of self-justification in it, in the way of others. But no one is a fair judge of what may be the religious wants and necessities of another, nor can say what will or will not contribute to his improvement. And in answer to those, who pretend that a proper attention to one's worldly prosperity is fully enough to occupy the leisure of the week, and that one day in seven is an ample allowance for spiritual concerns, it may be said, that it is not those who avoid occasions of this nature, who are most sedulous in the management of their worldly affairs, or most devoted on the Sabbath to the duties of the day; and that it will be full time for them to urge this objection, when it is proved that the evening, which they thus redeem, is appropriated to anything better than amusement, and the day which they reserve to religion, occupied in anything more improving, than empty reading or frivolous conversation.

To devise means for the improvement of the condition of the lower classes of society, morally, religiously, and politically, has been one of the great objects of the present age; an age distinguished above all others, for the number and variety of its plans for ameliorating the state of mankind. But direct reformation is a difficult task; it is seldom that those who have grown up in iniquity, whose vices have formed almost a part of their education, can be made permanently better; a transient impression may, accidentally, be produced, but it is effaced by the first temptation, and exercises no lasting influence on the character. It is only through the children, that we can hope to effect this purpose. We cannot cure the vices of lying, profanity, and intemperance in the father, but we may check and prevent them in the son. Poverty does not necessarily

entail an inheritance of vice; nor is the child of the sinner born necessarily to sin.

The grand engine then of moral and religious improvement is to be found in the education of the young. There can be no deeply founded and permanent reformation of any kind, except that which grows up with a generation; it is rarely, except when instilled into us from early childhood, that moral principles become so fixed, as to form an indelible part of the character. We are not aware how important an effect, the most trifling circumstance in early life may have, in forming and fixing the future character. That may make a strong impression upon a child, which makes none upon us; and if a strong impression be made, it may give a permanent bias, and its effects go on increasing through life; till that which was apparently but an unimportant propensity in youth, gives the predominating tendency to the character in mature life.

We need not despair because we do not see the direct and immediate influence of instruction. It may be long before its effects are exhibited; it may be never; but it is seldom that some influence is not exerted. It is astonishing, how in the later moments, and in the very dotage of existence, the active events, the feelings and the lessons of early life, will come up clearly and distinctly to the mind, when all those that have intervened have passed away from the memory. The ardor and impatience of youth, the busy scenes of manhood, the anxieties of approaching age are almost forgotten; they have left behind them but faint and uncertain traces, whilst the thoughts the affections, the associations of childhood come crowding upon the mind, and it seems transported back again to the delightful days of infancy.

It is never too late to hope that we may see the fruit of careful and well directed instruction. The good seed that is sown is never lost; it may lay long dormant in the mind, but it has within it, a principle which will never die, and which may, even in the extremity of our days produce a glorious harvest. Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it. Many men, I doubt not, whose course of life has seemed for the most part but little influenced by religious considerations, may yet towards its close, turn to the right path and live, and will owe their final preservation to that early tendency, which their minds received from the lessons, the instructions, and the examples of Sabbath Schools.

Address

DELIVERED ON

THE SECOND ANNIVERSARY.

NOV. 1824.

BY JOSHUA P. BLANCHARD.

I CONGRATULATE you my associated brethren, that I now address you on an occasion so happily exempt from foreboding prospects, or melancholy recollections. Two annual revolutions are completed, since you commenced your connected labours, and their termination has found us increased in number, undiminished in energy, and, I humbly trust, more closely allied in christian love and fellowship. The frost of death has not broken one link in our fraternal chain, nor has discord ruffled with a single wave, the placid surface of our harmonious intercourse.

However flattering may be the reflections, which the prosperity of our Association may inspire, it will, notwithstanding, be useful to check them on this occasion, to recollect that much imperfection yet remains; although the spirit which gave rise to our institution, has, in general, influenced us, we have yet occasion to lament some lukewarmness in this cause, and when I consider this circumstance, and the proneness to which we are all liable to flag in any pursuit, where constant excitement is not kept up; I think it will be beneficial to call your attention again to first principles, such, as though they may not possess the charm of novelty, may perhaps bear, and require much reiteration; and which, when fully understood, and constantly borne in mind, will of themselves give rise to every minor correction, and render minute precept unnecessary.

In offering motives to confirm our attachment to this institution, you will not expect me to carry you over the same ground, which you have once travelled with an able guide; to point out to you the duty and propriety as christians, of such connexions as will afford us an intercourse of a purely religious nature, which cannot be found in the ordinary relations of society; to represent the advantage of social deliberation, and elision of mutual opinion on religious topics; to urge on you the importance of the redemption of as much time as possible, from the engrossing cares of the world, to be dedicated to the higher exercises of devotion; to exhibit the influence of the pledge, which an entrance into such an Association as this, implies to lead a holy and moral life; or to remind you of the opportunities hereby afforded, to communicate religious and moral instruction to those who may need, and are willing to receive it. These considerations have been amply unfolded to you; and I could add nothing to the perspicuous elucidation which has been given of them. You all understand, and I trust, are governed by them; but you will allow me to occupy your attention with one principle, which is, I conceive, one of the greatest sources of energy and success, in every institution of this nature; and which is not usually sufficiently understood or admitted.

It is an important discovery of the present age, that voluntary associations of independent minds, are more powerful engines for the accomplishment of every benevolent design, than the most vigorous efforts of disconnected individuals, or the most direct exertions of civil power. This advantage flows from the collisions of free deliberation, resulting in prudence of conduct, from the superior influence of emulation and sympathetic excitement, over that derived from obedience or interest; and from the great aggregate power generated by concert, in the action of numbers. But experience teaches us, that voluntary associations exhibit energy, only in proportion to the field they afford for exertion; and those usually inspire the greatest interest, and produce the greatest results, which demand the active co-operation of the greatest proportion of their members. We have all witnessed, how feeble is the attachment which is felt to the most approved institutions, by those who have little agency in the management of their concerns, but are only required to give them inactive support and countenance. This suggests

to us the important principle alluded to, which is, that interest in any cause, is very much proportioned to the active part any individual takes in it; and that consequently, to create a strong and permanent attachment to any object, it is requisite to give all those concerned in it a part to perform.

A few reflections on other subjects, will convince us of the truth of this principle. How strong a solicitude, for instance, is excited respecting the management of national concerns, among all the citizens, in a government of popular form, where every one has, or fancies he has, by his suffrage, an influence upon it, compared to the political apathy, which prevails in those of monarchical construction. Is not much more anxiety observable, in those who have the direction of every mercantile corporation, than in those who have no control, although equally benefited in the profit? And can it be doubted that in theatrical exhibitions, the actor feels his character, its imaginary trials, and counterfeited passions, far more deeply than any of his audience, however impressive may be the representation? Other instances to this point might be enumerated, but enough has been produced to exemplify and demonstrate the principle; indeed, it is upon this principle, that is founded the proverbial importance which men attach, to professions to which they respectively belong.

Now this principle, I consider, applies with peculiar force to religion, and will account in a great measure for the fact, which has been so lamentably striking in our community, that while those classes of christians, who admit, and encourage the participation of their members of all degrees and professions, in religious exercises; are able to produce a deep and extensive excitement among them; and that, not only of a transient or impassioned nature, but one which often results in real improvement of religious principle, and moral character, and readiness to every good work; others, who confine all their devotional services to the regular ordinances of religion, in which none but those expressly set apart for the purpose, are expected to lead; in which, not only the instructions, but also the prayers, and even the musical addresses, are performed for them, as it were by proxy; too commonly exhibit a much greater indifference on the subject of religion; a difference, altogether unaccountable on any other principle. Ministers of the gospel, of transcendant talents, of sincere and ardent piety, and impressive

eloquence; urge the sublime and instructive truths of the gospel, in their purest interpretation, on audiences of rationality and sensibility, of docile and attentive dispositions; and light up a flame, as bright, but as transient, as that of the meteor; burning only in the calm atmosphere of the temple of God; but which the slightest breeze of the world extinguishes. Piety deplores this apparently inexplicable inconstancy; experience points to action as its remedy. Remove the prejudices which bar the participation of christians generally, in occasional acts of devotion and exhortation; and you make room in many otherwise insensible hearts, for the erection of altars, to the worship and service of God.

If the proposition I have endeavoured to establish, is correct, its application to such associations as this, is obvious. It forms a justification of them, against those, who perceive no necessity for the multiplication of religious services; but danger in every religious combination, except the customary organization of pastors, churches and societies; and at the same time leads us to a discovery of the measure best calculated to promote their greatest utility; which is, simply, to assign to each of their members a share in their benevolent pursuits; to suffer none to relapse into inert appendages to them; but to enable each individual to feel that some portion of their prosperity, reputation and influence, depends on his exertions. The result now educed, brings us to the door of another principle of voluntary religious associations, intimately connected with it. If the proposition which has been stated, be admitted, that such associations are the most efficient instruments of beneficence; and if it should have appeared, that their influence on their members, depends on their participation in activity, it will be clear, that these associations should originate as many, and as extensive plans of a religious or benevolent nature, as the efforts and talents of all their members are adequate to sustain; and by this means, the double object will be attained, of rendering them at once the agents of the greatest utility abroad; and the sources of the highest improvement of the minds and characters of their members; these two effects indeed are the avowed and leading objects of this Association; and we perceive, that they mutually promote and depend on each other.

Perhaps the most important, and certainly the most manifest

principle of religious association, is the cultivation of mutual religious affection in those associated. "By this," says our Lord, "shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have *love* one to another." When the love of God, and of divine truth, takes possession of the mind; and the glittering objects of human pursuit are viewed with indifference or disgust, and lose the power to dazzle and to charm; when the appalling view of past sins, follies and delusions, built high by passion, and cemented by habit, terrifies the shrinking recollection; and when the perception of that divine love, which has provided a refuge from these evils, and which calls the sickened imagination, to dwell on nobler and purer objects, cheers the grateful heart; the social principle, sanctified, and not obliterated, seeks with solicitude, and meets with delight, the discovery of congenial spirits, thinly scattered like fragrant flowers, amid the luxuriant weeds of business, and polity, and pleasure; who, animated by the same hopes, and oppressed with the same conflicts, offer a sympathy, as much more attractive and consoling than that of worldly friendships, as their common object of adoration exceeds all the idols of earth. This is the basis of christian love; and this love impels to association; the soil where it is nurtured most successfully; and where its roots deeply laid in immutable virtue, shall not be torn up like the thorns of worldly care, by the blasts of death; but in ages beyond it, shall flourish in immortal growth.

My brethren, I would have you view this institution, as one of no common interest and importance. We have seen, that considered as a means of religious improvement, and religious affection, its effects may reach beyond this stage of being, and go with us into eternity; and regarded as an instrument of good to others, we need not set any definite limit to its influence; it may acquire the capacity of producing far greater effects on the community, than most of you are aware; it is indeed, a small and obscure beginning; and it may seem visionary to assign to it a very extensive or conspicuous sphere of action; but let us recollect, how humble and feeble has been the infancy of most of those agents, which have effected the greatest moral revolutions in society; and we need not shrink at claiming an elevated station for the future destiny of this Association; especially when we survey the peculiar auspices attending its rise and progress.

We have associated, under circumstances highly favorable for the promise of extensive benefit. In the first place, we are not composed of the great and the rich. This class of persons, however moral may be their principles, or benevolent their feelings, are generally found too much occupied with the cares and avocations of mercantile or political life, to permit us to expect from them much active aid, in operations of a simply religious or instructive nature. To them, in any good and rational project, we may indeed look for every pecuniary support, and every encouragement, not requiring labour; and I trust, with pride we may say, that in this favoured land, so distinguished by liberal philanthropy, we shall not look in vain; but for every active exertion, we must depend on those of similar situation to ourselves.

Again, we are composed in a considerable proportion of the young. This circumstance is favorable, not only as ensuring to us the ardour, the unwavering confidence, the sanguine hopes of youth, which, when directed as they ought to, and will be, by the counsels of maturer years, are the surest pledges of success; but we are thereby led to anticipate greater durability to the institution; and greater perseverance in any of its pursuits, requiring time for their completion; and which, borne on the arms of the more aged, might be arrested by the hand of death, in the midst of their career.

But a far more important ground of promise exists in the state of our religious community: this, my brethren, you are aware, is a divided, controversial state; and although there are perhaps as many varieties of sentiment, as the freedom of investigation which prevails, the diversity of minds, and the number of topics embraced by the scriptures, can give rise to; there are yet some prominent tenets, held in common by one portion of these sects, and denied in concert by the other portion; the dispute on which, combines them into two great parties; which thus have each, a common ground of union, unaffected by their minor differences.

Now you know, that the members of one of these parties, are conspicuous in the labors we are endeavouring to assume; they abound in prayer meetings, and conference meetings, and associations, and every instrument of excitement, and they do not stop here; but their zeal carries them into many benevo-

lent plans for the good of mankind; and their purses and their efforts are ready for every labour of love, which may be represented to them, as conducive to human amelioration. It is true that much delusion, and many improprieties have been visible in these exhibitions; and often have passions been indulged, and prejudices maintained, and measures pursued, which do not seem to us to comport with christian principles; but if sincerely guided by sentiments which appear to them to be true, however we may lament their errors, we cannot but judge the consistent spirit and resolution which are exerted to give them effect, truly worthy of commendation; and regret, that similar enterprise has not been called forth, in the promulgation of a purer faith, or the promotion of more unexceptionable plans of beneficence.

But unhappily, the defects and corruptions which have accompanied these displays of zeal, have occupied so conspicuous a place in the view of those with whom we are classed, as to have eclipsed the merit which should have been ascribed to the zeal itself; and hence we have witnessed the melancholy spectacle of a great part of an intelligent, wealthy, and liberal community, standing aloof from every project, bearing the peculiar marks of religious character. Wealth has been poured out with a generous hand, for the relief of distress, the advancement of science and literature, or the removal of physical evil. Labour, and ingenuity, and eloquence, have been laid under contribution, for the amendment of political defects, or the correction of jurisprudential codes; but when you solicit contributions or efforts to any considerable extent, for the promotion of the most important of all objects, the diffusion of religious sentiment; the chilling indifference which often meets your solicitations, evinces the paralysing effects of the dread of fanaticism.

With joyful hope, we perceive this error passing away. Individuals of all religious classes, are awakening to a sense of the importance of religious activity. Liberal christians are now learning, that liberality and rationality *only*, are not christianity; that it is not a system of speculation merely, in which the feelings have no concern, and to which no ardour of attachment is to be felt; and every where indications are seen, of desire for the excitement of zeal, in more exalting and purifying systems of religion, than those on which it has hitherto

been expended. It is felt and acknowledged, that in the solemn truths which religion conveys to us, in the momentous anticipations of futurity, there are sublimer occupations of intellect, than science affords; honours and powers, higher than policy confers; pleasures, which wealth cannot purchase; distresses, which generosity does not relieve; and when to this elevated altar, opulence shall bring its offerings, and learning pour its libations, and custom bend its knees, and enthusiasm offer its devotions; then shall it no longer be a reproach to that system of christianity, which exhibits the most amiable and interesting views of the divine character, the most persuasive motives, the most encouraging hopes, of any now presented to world, that it wants the power to awaken, to sanctify, and to save.

Here then, we have precisely the state of things most favorable to an enterprise like ours; for we everywhere see around us, awakened desires, seeking a specific object; disconnected efforts requiring a point of contact; and what organization of individuals can we imagine better adapted to supply these wants, than that we have instituted? We see, indeed, the growing spirit we have spoken of, venting itself in the formation of associations within our respective religious societies; and these, so far as they extend, may be highly beneficial, if not suffered to relapse into inactivity; but it is obvious, that in all combinations gathered from a limited field, and confined to limited spheres of action, the objects proposed, and effects produced, must be proportionally limited; to carry general plans into operation, a medium of concert is requisite; and we, who are composed of various societies, are eminently fitted to act in that capacity; and hence, if any extended operations, in advancement of pure religious truth is to be contemplated by us, it is by this, or by similar institutions, that they will be best originated and conducted.

To our respected and beloved clergy, we indeed look for impulse and direction; and far be it from us to imply, that any remissness with them, renders associations like this, necessary to supply the defect; on the contrary, we have seen them taking a leading and conspicuous part in every good work; and many of them unwearied in their endeavours, to awaken a spirit of religious zeal in their societies; and it is the very effect of these exertions, to give rise to associations of this nature. But ministers of the gospel, considered as insulated individuals,

can accomplish but little; the power they possess, is a mental, influential power; and depends for its efficacy on the sympathy and support it calls forth, among the people of their charge. But if the principle which has been maintained is correct, in order to excite this sympathy, and secure this support, in the most effectual manner, it is requisite to give the people religious employment, and opportunity of co-operation; and hence ministers should hail associations of individuals of other professions, for religious purposes, as the most direct fruits of their exhortations, and the surest earnest of their support; and we have accordingly a right to calculate on their warm approbation and countenance.

Let it not be objected, there is danger of excess; or indiscretion, in such institutions: may we not confide in the rationality of our faith; the influence of education and example; the dread of enthusiasm which prevails; and above all, the ascendancy we are willing to accord to our pastors, and more experienced christian friends, to secure us from every apprehended evil?

My brethren, have I directed you to a lofty aim, and pointed out an extended and useful path; and anticipated great and extensive effects from our association? Remember, I have only shewn its capacities; and not its necessary effect. It depends on us, whether it shall attain the high character and influence of which it is susceptible, or sink, as many other religious institutions have done, into obscurity and decline.—To secure the advantages described, it is requisite that we bestow on it our time, and our attention. We must be constant and punctual at its meetings; ready to originate and to act, in all such plans as accord with its character; we must strive to augment its numbers, advance its reputation and usefulness; and not contenting ourselves with a cold and passive adherence to it, must bear it warm attachment; and find an interest and a pleasure in its services. I do not say, that all the other avocations of life must be rigorously sacrificed, whenever brought into competition with the claims of this institution; for no true interpretation of christianity, will teach us to violate the obligations, or neglect the duties, God has imposed on us in our respective relations in life; but I would strenuously urge, that slight engagements, and unimportant occupations, such as would be readily deferred, for any urgent, social, or commercial call,

should not prevent our attendance on a religious institution like this; and we shall not feel this to be a sacrifice, if we are duly impressed with the importance of the character, which this Association may, by our exertions, be made to assume, and the elevated hopes of futurity, the purified affections, and the philanthropic influence, which have been represented as ready to flow from its energetic support. These are motives, if duly weighed, and fully believed, adequate to induce us to make every effort for it, consistent with other duties.

To these, another consideration may be added, which though much inferior, is by no means to be overlooked. The character of the class of christians to which we belong, is in a considerable degree dependent on the energy and perseverance, with which institutions like this are conducted; for its religious state is indicated and judged by their maintenance and progress; if, therefore, we suffer such associations as this, to decline and expire; it will be said, with much appearance of reason, that a sufficient degree of religious spirit does not exist among us, to support any voluntary institution of a decidedly devotional character. You may throng the house of public worship, for it does not interfere with the time of worldly business, and is a creditable compliance with custom; you may be moral in your deportment, and liberal in your donations, for you thereby advance your reputation and influence; but to go out of the beaten track, into extraordinary scenes of devotion, offers no reward, except to minds trained to piety; and can only gratify desires, which to you are unknown.

Now let us not say, that to such allegations we will be indifferent; that satisfied of the rectitude of our principles, we will not change our course, in reference to human praise or censure. Let us recollect that the character of our religious friends is their property; which is in some degree under our control, and for the care of which they have a claim upon us; and we are bound to preserve it, in the same manner as any other property committed to our charge; and the same principles of benevolence which would induce us to communicate any other blessing, should impel us to enhance the greatest of all earthly ones, reputation.

Give then to this Association and its objects, a languid, indifferent, irresolute attention, which will by degrees become burthensome, and terminate in total neglect; and we shall see it

sink into oblivion, with all the hopes and affections we have attached to it; we shall plunge again into the conflict of the world, divested of a portion of our armor, important for the repulsion of its attacks; and robbed of the emulation, encouragement and counsel, which invigorates us in the struggle; we shall tear from our bosoms, the holy love, which unity of sentiment, co-operation in labour, sympathy in trial, and similarity of high aspirations, have made so dear to them; we shall abandon the field to renewed sterility, where we had prepared to sow the seeds of juvenile knowledge and piety; and we shall expose to the severity of sectarian censure, (in one instance at least,) the rational gospel we profess, as uninteresting and powerless, and confess it inadequate to emancipate us from the chains of the world.

On the other hand, let us give this institution our ardent, active, unremitted support; strive to elevate and purify its character, and augment its usefulness, and its influence; and small as the seed now appears, we may accelerate its growth and extend its branches, till they overspread the whole region in unison with us: we may erect a tower of strength, which without the confusion, and the fall of Babel, may, in the truest sense, reach to heaven; and guarded by its impregnable walls, from all the assaults of irreligion, and false religion; we may not only ourselves aspire to its sublime summit; but from thence, may dispense light to direct others in the ascending path, and consolation and beneficence to the darkest wilderness beneath.

To you my respected auditors, who by your presence with us this evening, indicate the interest you take in our Association; the views I have given of its character, its objects, and its hopes, are not foreign and indifferent topics, in which you have no concern; for you see before you an institution, designed expressly for religious improvement and instruction; and prepared to aid the regular ministration of religious services, and the efforts of the professed ministers of the gospel, by other methods, inconvenient for their adoption: you will recognise it as a result of a rising devotional spirit, in the hearts of rational christians in our country; and designed to aid in the promotion of a more animated, energetic pursuit of religious objects, than has been hitherto evinced: and this is a work, which claims the attention and sympathy of every lover

of rational christianity, of whatever rank or character: and you may aid this work, and this Association which has assumed it, by your presence and encouragement, your prayers, your benefactions to any of its worthy objects; by sending from your respective circles, augmentations to its numbers, of such as accord with us in sentiment and spirit; and by making known its character, and exciting imitations of its example, wherever your voice is heard. Believe me, you can scarce render to enlightened christianity, a more real service, than by forwarding every attempt to give it a visible, practical form; and by contributing to the power it derives from the sympathy and concert of organized combinations.

True it is, that sincere, devout affection is seated in the mind, where it holds its secret communion with its divine author and object; but the light which he elicits there, does not remain buried in that unseen recess, but beams forth and is reflected from all around it. Religion, though a personal property of each of its believers, is in its operations and effects, eminently social and communicative; and delights in the sympathies it discovers, and the energies and hopes it inspires, in other minds; and if you perceive in this Association, any exemplification of this divine love, this sacred sympathy; may you not be stimulated to add your affections to ours; to emulate its example; and by diffusing wide around you the influence of its principles, draw together into a closely cemented union, all the scattered fragments of religious character in the community; till a phalanx be formed, before which the hosts of error and vice which assail us, shall retreat in dismay; and which may perpetually augment in power, till pure and elevated christianity shall triumph in unresisted sway; and our whole land be "full of the knowledge of God, as the waters cover the sea:" and should we fail of this high measure of success, the effort to produce it, may so invigorate us all, for our pressure through the labours and conflicts of this mysterious scene of probation, as to qualify us to attain to the more exalted services, the more perfect enjoyment, and the closer friendship, of a celestial, eternal, unbounded Association.

Address

DELIVERED ON

THE THIRD ANNIVERSARY.

NOV. 1825.

BY GEORGE A. SAMPSON.

By the kindness of my friends, I find myself in a situation at once novel and interesting. I stand here to address those who should be my instructers, to whom I could listen with pleasure and profit; and it is only the strong assurance I feel, that you will lend me every indulgence, encourages me thus to present myself before you.

By the good providence of God, we have been permitted to witness the close of another year of the existence of this Association, and we have met together this evening, in this public manner, to notice the return of its anniversary. I trust that we have come up hither with the liveliest feelings of gratitude to the preserver of our lives, that He has been pleased to continue and keep together this little fraternity. We are few in numbers, and one, uninterested, ignorant of the objects for which we are associated, would regard our thus publicly noticing its anniversary, as absurd and childish; and if one have in mind the celebration of anniversaries of great events, we could not deem it strange, that he should thus regard it; but as the occasion has not probably made present any, who do not appreciate the feelings of the Association, it will not be necessary that any thing should be said, to excuse the desire expressed by the Association of thus celebrating its anniversary.

We are, emphatically a religious Association; as by the name we bear, we avow religious improvement to be the object for

which we are associated; and it may, perhaps, be profitable to reflect upon the past, and ask ourselves if this object has been accomplished in any degree, and if at all, whether we have derived from it all the good that we might; and as far as we are able, suggest to ourselves the way in which we may in the future, make it a greater help to us in our christian course. If it shall be seen, that it has been and may continue to be, a helper to us on our way, God grant that we may have the disposition to avail of it; feeling as I trust we do, our need of all the assistance that can be afforded us. It was this feeling that gave birth to the Association,—cherish it;—send back your minds to that period, and learn to feel again as you then felt; and you cannot choose a moment more favourable for it than this; when involuntarily there is associated in the mind, the circumstances under which you formed yourselves together; if you are able to do this, if your coming together at this time, shall enable you so to revert to the period of your formation, as to incite in you the same state of feeling, that generous glow, that holy fervour; it will not be in vain that we have thus assembled. Do not let the fear of being carried away by your feelings, as it is sometimes expressed, cause you to check or stifle them. At the present age and with the sentiments you entertain of religious truth, you need not fear that you shall be too enthusiastic. We grant that there may be fanaticism and delusion, but that we can feel too deeply on religious subjects we deny. The experience of all who have felt the power of religion, has been, that in the same degree, that they cherished and kept alive a deep feeling of the importance of religious truth, they have made progress in religious knowledge. It is no more true of religion, than of any science or art, for in proportion as one regards them important, and feels an interest in them, in the same proportion will he make proficiency in them. We may not then hope to derive any advantage from this, or any of the means of religious improvement, unless we feel deeply the importance of religion.

Having laid this down as a fundamental principle, it may, in our reflections on the benefits we have derived from the association, make obvious the reason, why they have not been greater; and I doubt not we shall find that it was the absence of a deep and habitual feeling of the importance of religion. In religion, more than in any thing else, do we need excitement;

and the rich provision that has been made to produce it, abundantly proves it; and association more than any thing else contributes to it. This we assign as a principal reason for uniting ourselves together, that we may be excited to deeper feelings on religious subjects. How far then have the purposes of the Association, as we proposed to inquire, been answered? and would not the stated public meetings for religious worship and improvement, have done all, and to as great a degree, as these united? And here I would wish to have it distinctly understood, that in any thing I may have occasion to say, in speaking of the advantages to be derived from private meetings for worship and improvement, that I disclaim the thought of undervaluing public worship, in public temples. I am thus particular, as I am aware that the charge has been made against those who favour private meetings, that they attach greater importance to them, than to the regular public worship of God's house. How far this may be true, or how far, and what part, the wish to excuse a non-attendance on all private meetings, had, in originating this charge, we shall not stop to inquire. Suffice it to say, in behalf of the Association, that they regard public worship as the great and the principal means of spreading religious truth; and that, to shut up the public temples of the Most High, would be to strike a death-blow, if possible, to the existence of religion in the world.

We say then, having no fears of being misunderstood, that we have derived many and great advantages from thus associating together, that we could not have derived from merely attending upon public worship, and which we should have failed of, had we stood alone. All public addresses must needs be general, and their application, though more particular and pointed, yet cannot, and ought not descend, to the minutiæ of duty. In what manner then are we to supply this important deficiency, not to say defect, for they are, under the circumstances, all they can be made to be? Can it fail to suggest itself to the mind that reflects, that in no way, can this be done so well, as for those who feel an interest in what we have called the minutiæ of duty, to assemble themselves together, and from each other learn how they can best discharge these duties. Your experience, brethren, on this point, if it could be made known, would be evidence sufficient to prove the asser-

tion I have made of the advantages we have derived from this Association. A minister draws the outlines of duty, to him who sets about performing it remains the task of completing what he has only begun. And say, come we from the public altar, thoroughly furnished to this great work? Has there a flame been kindled, that will burn brightly, until we go up again to the altar? Would that it were so, would that experience and observation did not forbid our cherishing a thought so pleasing. We have worshipped at the public altar with such fervour of devotion, and have felt that our faith had received such strength, that the world would in vain present an obstacle to the performance of duty; but, alas! what has been our experience; as if, at once, and signally to reprove our confidence, we find ourselves in a moment, as it were, grovelling in the dust, the slaves of some temptation, that we would not, or fancied that we could not, resist. It will then, perhaps, be asked, if after this, we can hope that any means may be found, that will afford us greater security against temptation? I have no hesitation in answering, that we do hope, even with this melancholy failure in mind, that means may be found, not to substitute in place of those holy feelings, but which, if brought in aid of them, would afford us greater security in our temptations and trials. Have we not found, brethren, that by associating ourselves together, by an interchange of sentiment, by speaking freely and frankly of the difficulties, that lay in the way of our duty, the manner in which they should be met, the most successful way of overcoming them; have we not found, that we were better enabled to hold fast our integrity?

To the sin of thoughtlessness, for we cannot speak of it in milder terms, has properly been attributed a very great amount of the evil that exists in the world; that an association like this may do much to correct it, must be obvious; for one who joins such an association with proper feelings, and becomes interested in it, will be prevented from going on with thoughtless indifference; he will find himself checked often, until he shall become a reflecting being. Accomplish this, and you afford to man the greatest security against evil, with which he can be furnished.

Another important end, which such an association is designed to answer, and which we regard of primary importance is, that it practically shows, that a man may be, what is significantly

termed, "a religious man," and at the same time, be, what is as significantly termed, "a business man," I need not say, of how much importance it is, that it should be demonstrated to the world, that this is practicable; and here an opportunity is afforded.

The world have been told from the lips of ministers, that an attention to religion is not incompatible with a proper regard to the common business of life; but we know that it is not generally believed; and we ourselves, though perhaps we have never wholly disbelieved it, have yet confessed, that ministers did not fully know, from experience, all the difficulties that lie in the way. This idea, which is so prevalent, is a great evil, and perhaps does more than all other causes put together, in making men irreligious. In my remarks here, I would keep in view solely, the community in which we live. The great majority with us are not inattentive to religion, from a desire to indulge in gross sins, which religion forbids, no; this number is comparatively small. Why is it, then, that we witness such indifference to religion? Why is it, that except on the Sabbath, so many are unwilling to give any attention to the subject? so that one would think, and as we fear it will be found in fact, that very many regard themselves as religious beings, only, during holy time? Now, we think, that there will not be any difficulty in tracing the cause of all this, to the idea, which we have said was so prevalent. Is it not, therefore, of the greatest importance, that an impression so erroneous should be corrected? I fear that we shall find in ourselves, some remains of this error; let us, therefore, carefully examine ourselves on this point, and free our minds entirely of it; for to be at all skeptical in regard to this, will be a great hindrance to us. In what way, it may be asked, can this Association do aught to correct this evil? As an Association, we can hope to do but little; but as individuals, who compose this Association, we may do much. We are composed of business men, actively engaged in the bustle of life; it is there you must hope to exert your influence, do not fear to have it known, that you profess to be christians, practical christians. You are not asked to blazon it forth, by talking much about it; yet we must never be ashamed, honestly, to avow it. It must happen to every man, that there are times and seasons, when he feels himself obligated, as a lover of truth, to enter into its defence, to shew that he is on

the Lord's side. Have we done this? Is this the course we have pursued? Have we not rather shunned the public eye, and so comported, that the world would suspect any thing sooner, than that we professed to be very religious? I fear, brethren, that this has been too much the case, and that in this important particular, we have been faithless to our duty as professing christians; faithless to the pledge, that is tacitly given in joining such an association as this. Although there is not any thing that can be urged, that will excuse us for the omission of this important part of our duty; yet, there is much that may be said, by way of accounting for it, without attributing it to a want of interest in, or attachment to, the cause of religion.

It has unfortunately happened, that among those who have been most conspicuous for their apparent piety and devotedness to the cause of religion, the world has seen much hypocrisy, and much justly to condemn. So true is this, and to so wide an extent, that the moment a man takes a single step in religion beyond what is termed a proper observance of it, he is regarded with suspicion; even his friends look upon him with distrust, and all are willing to attribute it to any cause, rather than that he is zealously affected in the good cause. Another reason may be assigned for the unwillingness there is on the part of professing christians, publicly to manifest the interest they feel in religion, which is, the melancholy examples they have witnessed of those who had thus publicly shown their zeal, and who did run well for a season, but in time of temptation fell away. This, perhaps, is the principal reason, with very many; they distrust themselves; and fear, lest they should not hold out to the end; and the evil consequences of their failure, they reckon, would be far greater, than all the good they could possibly accomplish. That these considerations, and many others that might be noticed, do operate upon the minds of christians, in the manner we have mentioned, will I think be admitted.

It will be remembered, that we have not mentioned these reasons, either to extenuate or excuse the omission of that part of the christian's duty, which we have been considering, viz. "to let your light so shine, that others seeing your good works, may glorify your Father, who is in Heaven." This is the only public, distinguishing characteristic of our religion. Let us therefore, weigh this matter seriously. It is melancholy to

witness the inconsistency even of those, whom we are persuaded are sincere, but who, by their example, do more to injure the cause, which they have so warmly espoused, than the avowed enemies of religion. The cause suffers comparatively little from these; it is chiefly from those, who believe themselves to be its friends, and are so to a certain extent; this will be plainly made to appear, when we consider, that the world looks at and judges of men by their every day character. Now, if it is seen that religion has not the power to restrain the passions; that it allows in such as much worldly mindedness, as they find consistent with their interest, not as christians, but as men, who are grasping at every thing within their reach; who compass every means in their power, honourable or dishonourable, to accumulate wealth; if the world see this, can we measure the evil, which such friends do to the cause of religion. It needs only, that we be *consistent* christians, and the great benefits, that we have said would result from our example, will be witnessed.

There is much at the present day, that is encouraging to the christian. The march of mind knows no obstruction; every barrier is thrown down; received opinions are fearlessly examined; and nothing that the mind can grasp, is considered too sacred to be investigated. A few there are, who look on with dismay, and fear that the good old paths are to be forsaken. While their fears are respected, let it not deter inquiry. At the same time we would deprecate a blind zeal, that drives on impetuously, discarding maxims and disbelieving what have long been received as truths, without the strongest evidence and the clearest convictions. Would you now make man a religious being, you must inform his mind and convince his understanding, as well as terrify his conscience and affect his heart. Religion, in the view of many, appears to be something very different from what they once regarded it; much attention is excited to the subject, and much is doing by those who were thought to be indifferent to it. If the cause of all this was inquired of us, perhaps we should attribute it to the wider spread of the sentiments of religious truth, which we entertain. Be this as it may; let us be satisfied and rejoice in view of the present interesting state of the christian world. In what is doing, it is gratifying to observe the importance that is attached to association, as a great mean of exertion; for, however well

satisfied experience has made us, of the advantages resulting from association, it is encouraging to witness the prevalence of the same opinion. It gives us greater confidence and strength, which ought, and we hope will produce correspondent exertions. While our numbers are so few, we may not hope, nor will it be expected, that we shall act a very conspicuous part in the great and interesting work that is going on. Do not let this discourage any, we can confidently promise to any and to all, that when this Association has through their exertion, done all that it may do, the consciousness of the part they have taken, and the interest they have felt in it, shall give them the fullest satisfaction; and the time that shall be devoted to it, will not be regarded as having been spent in vain.

As by a vote of the Association, within the past year, the Hancock Sabbath School was taken under your immediate care and superintendence, it will not be deemed irrelevant, that the teachers, whom we are pleased to see present, be particularly addressed on this occasion. In behalf of the Association I would assure you, that they regard with a deep feeling of interest, the labour in which the most of you have so long, and all of you have so faithfully engaged. We appreciate the feelings, that causes you voluntarily, to make so great a sacrifice of that part of your time, which, more than any other, is regarded as valuable; and we feel that every encouragement should be afforded you, and I doubt not you feel assured of the disposition that is felt by the Association to render you every assistance. And also for your encouragement, I am happy that I can assure you, that much attention from another quarter, has been drawn to this Institution; and the interest that was expressed, and the measures that have been adopted, promise to do much in aiding your exertions. Still let me urge upon you the necessity there is, that for your chief and greatest encouragement, you are to look to the approbation of your consciences and your satisfaction will be great; the reflection, that you are employed in sowing seed, which you trust, by being well watered, will spring up to life eternal, will give great peace to your spirits, and in cherishing the hope, that you may be permitted to witness the effects of your exertions, you will find a motive at once pleasant and animating. Do not let the exhibition of froward spirits or fractious tempers discourage, but the more endeavour to in-

stil into the mind, that which shall control the temper, and fashion the spirit, after the pattern of all that is excellent. Let it be your aim to gain the affections of those who are under your care, and doubt not by judicious management, you may command and improve the most froward ; let the thought that it is such, who most need the instructions and the good influence of attendance upon your care, make you willing to bear long and be kind ; these are they, who, if they fail of religious instruction here, will be sent into the world destitute of it, and the evil consequences that will ensue, both to them and to society will be great ; your duty, therefore, you will regard important. Be faithful. And that your labours may be crowned with abundant success, is our ardent wish and prayer.

THREE SERMONS,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE PRINCIPLES

OF

UNITARIAN CHRISTIANITY,

Preached in Utica,

ON SUNDAY, THE 12th, OF OCTOBER, 1828.

BY WILLIAM WARE.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

Utica:

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1828.

THE discourses which are here given to the public contain a statement sufficiently exact for purposes of general information, of the principles of Unitarian Christianity. They fairly represent in all essential points the faith of the Sect. Still it should be every where and by all distinctly understood, that Unitarians are a body, who while they agree in most things differ also in some, and think it generally of far more consequence to keep the mind open to new views and further truth, and to act in perfect independence, than to unite without variance in a given set of opinions.

These Sermons were, one or all of them also preached in Lyons, Rochester, Syracuse, Salina and Watertown. To those who heard them in those places, and to the lovers of truth and free inquiry every where, they are now respectfully inscribed, in the earnest hope and prayer that they may be conducive in some measure, to the spread and influence of the Truth as it is in Jesus.

"THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS."

2d. TIMOTHY, I. 13.

Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me.

The question immediately arises on hearing or reading these words, what is meant by the form of sound words? The Apostle doubtless means by it, the true doctrine of christianity as he had preached it. He enjoins Timothy to hold fast the truth in Jesus, as he had received it from his lips.—What, then, the question returns, is the truth in Jesus? What is the true doctrine of christianity as Paul understood and preached it?

To this, there will various answers be given. The Catholic will say, the truth in Jesus is to be found only among the members of the ancient Roman Church—the mother of churches. They who deny her authority and reject her doctrine, are heretics and beyond the limits of salvation. The Protestant of the Church of England, claims his own church as the true christian church—denounces alike Rome and the dissenter—and finds all that is right, in doctrine, ritual, and government within the pale of his own communion. The Presbyterian is equally confident and equally exclusive. All truth is with him. All who believe more or less than he, are in damnable error. And most other christian sects, of which you know how many there are, believe—each of itself—that they hold the form of sound words in the very sense that the Apostle did—that all who hold not the same in the same sense are in very dangerous, if not fatal error.

But while each sect thus claims to be right, and at the same time condemns every other, for departing so far from the truth in Jesus, what shall the inquirer do? Where shall he turn? There were certain doctrines taught by Jesus, which did at the first, do now, and must ever constitute *true* christianity. Where and among whom are those doctrines to be found?

This is a question both important and interesting, notwithstanding it has been so long, and so earnestly agitated.

Yet let it not be supposed, as it so often is, that its determination is essential to salvation. Oh no. Let us think more worthily of our Father in Heaven, than to suppose, that before he will receive us, we must be able to repeat a particular creed, and worship in a particular church. It is our sincerity, our honesty, our fairness of mind, our love of truth, and our conformity to its requisitions when discovered, that will form the grounds of our final acceptance; not our possession of the whole and exact truth itself. For then, who

since the Apostles could be saved? For scarce two christians since the first century have believed in all respects alike.—And the obvious reason of this is, that our minds are so constituted that we *cannot* believe alike. The same evidence affects different minds very differently: they cannot see in it the same force and value: they *cannot help* therefore, believing differently: nature compels them; it is a law of the mind—the appointment of God—shall they suffer for it?

Involuntary error of faith is therefore innocent. And all those christians of every other sect but the true one—and which this is, there is no power to decide—so long as they are sincere in the adoption of their faith, whatever it may be, so long as they have arrived at it, through fair, impartial, honest, diligent inquiry, are they not safe? They have striven for the truth, they have prayed that they might be enabled to discern and receive it, and may they not repose peacefully in the conviction, that a God of mercy, nay a God of justice, will count their faith to them, thus obtained, for righteousness? That he will never damn them for holding speculative errors, which they could not help holding, which, perhaps, they did not even so much as know that they held!

Does not this seem reasonable and true? Yet how few act as if they thought it true. The common language and feeling among christains is, that there is a select number of doctrines, neither more nor fewer, which if a man do not believe *he shall perish everlastingly*—and there is little else heard in christendom therefore, but the language of anathema and exclusion. Each sect believing a certain *faith* essential to salvation (not a certain life, no sect ever anathematised an other for any heresy in morals) denounces, hates, reviles every other that differs from it, or differs beyond a certain point. But how abhorrent is this to the spirit of christianity, which is a spirit of love! What a violation of every dictate of sound reason and common sense! What a prolific source of discord and sorrow throughout the whole christian community!

Although, then, we may not be able to say which is the true sect and enrol ourselves among its numbers, there is no occasion on that account for despondency or fear; for God will accept the sincere pious believer, whether with the Athanasian he believes that Christ is God and worships him as such, or with the Unitarian that he is not God, and conscientiously restricts his worship, after the example of the Saviour, to the Father.

This is saying plain, self-evident things, but they are not the less important. Plain as they are too, and self-evident as they seem, they are very commonly, either virtually or directly denied.

Another consideration to the same purpose is,—that although strictly speaking, only one sect can be the true one, yet each sect holds many of the doctrines, and those the most important and influential ones as regards practice, which every other sect holds. There is a common ground, and it is not a narrow one, where all believers in Jesus meet, and where they ought to meet in peace. We *all* believe in a God, a God possessed of all perfection. We all believe in his kind universal providence—we all believe in his

Son Jesus Christ, that he came from God with his will and authority to save a lost world, and by his instructions, sufferings, example, death and resurrection to bring sinners to God—we all believe in the Holy Spirit of God, that it was poured out on Prophets and Apostles of old, to enable them to speak as the oracles of God, and that it is still mysteriously shed abroad upon the hearts of men. We all believe in the resurrection from the dead and the life everlasting; and, with some few exceptions, we all believe the future life to be one of just retribution,—that there is a Heaven of Joy and bliss for the good, and a Hell of unimaginable woe for the wicked. We all receive the bible as our rule of faith and duty, and believe that it is the word of God, inasmuch as it was written by men whom he inspired, and contains his will revealed for our salvation.—These things, all of us who call ourselves christians unite in believing. Upon these main doctrines we engraft, it is true, many peculiarities, some of more some of less consequence. But while each believes so much that enters into the creed of every other christian—that too which lies at the foundation of all religion, the existence of God, the mission of Jesus, and the future retribution—can we not pardon in our brother some little deviation from what *we* conceive to be the true line? Knowing that *he* differs not more from us than *we* do from him, and *both* do perhaps from the precise truth—can we not love him, deal kindly by him? are we not ashamed when we reflect on the matter to do otherwise? Are we not persuaded with the force of a demonstration, that God will accept us at last, not for our faultlessness in faith or duty, but, if at all, for our sincerity, our honesty? and shall we not then accept one another? Would it not be the basest presumption in us, and the most flagrant inconsistency, to treat our fellow christians of a different faith, any otherwise than with the most liberal charity and perfect love, when we daily pray to God to forgive us *our* errors, and when we rest all our hope on the extension of that forgiveness?—May God in his grace, give us all kind and considerate hearts, and root out from among us all bitterness and uncharitableness.

But if these considerations are a ground for charity, for believing that the good of every sect will find acceptance with God—nay the *good* of whatever faith, and wherever in the wide world they have lived, according to that saying of Peter, "In EVERY NATION he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him."* Still, it is desirable, and our duty to learn as near as may be, what the *exact* and *whole* truth in Jesus is,—what were the sound words which *he* preached, which Paul preached, and which we if it be possible, ought to believe.

But how shall this be done? How shall we arrive at a knowledge of the truth? Where there is such wide difference of opinion, and no

* Whether the following article from the confession of faith adopted by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, and published by their authority, is in *coincidence* or in *contrast* with the sentiment of this text, is submitted to a candid comparison.

"Much less can men, not professing the christian religion be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, and the law of that religion they do profess; and to assert and maintain that they may is very pernicious, and to be detested. *Assembly's Confession, Ch. 40, Sect 7.*

authority to which all will assent or submit, in what way, and by the use of what means may we hope to discover the truth as it is in Jesus? We are, in this work, thrown wholly upon ourselves and our own efforts. If we would know the truth we must of ourselves seek where it is to be found. If we would understand the Scriptures and know what they indeed contain and teach, we must ourselves *search them*. We have minds, we must use them in this work. We must think, and judge and decide for ourselves. We must study and weigh the evidences which the advocates for different systems produce. Indolence and inattention and wilful ignorance will not be held innocent in us. The subject is a dignified and important one, the means for investigating it are in the hands of almost all; we are bound to employ them vigorously and freely. It is by free inquiry then, if at all, that we shall learn what the sound words of the Gospel are. Free inquiry is the only probable means —I might say the only possible means, by which that religious truth we all so much wish to possess, may be discovered, and *that*, let us remember, will be saving truth—or orthodoxy *for us*, which after inquiry, we conscientiously adopt. To inquire, therefore, for the truth, is *our sŏlemn duty*, as it is our *inalienable right*.

It is our inalienable right. None may innocently, by direct or indirect means, hinder us in the exercise of this right.

Although in past ages of the church, this right has been denied and withheld by those who had the power to do so, I do not believe that in our country, and at the present day, an individual could be found, either in the pulpit or out of the pulpit, hardy enough to assert, in so many words, that christians have not the *right* to form and avow their own religious opinions. We have in these free and happy regions been so long unshackled by arbitrary power in the exercise of private judgment on every other topic of interest, that now, though dearly desired by the lovers of spiritual rule, it has become too late to attempt *openly* to bind or control the mind on the subject of religion. But though I believe this, that both clergy and people would in the abstract maintain and defend the great protestant principle *the right of private judgment in matters of faith*, yet nothing is plainer than that it is indirectly, virtually trampled upon and violated every day, and every where throughout the land. The priesthood of the dominant party, with their aiders and abettors, do not indeed in so many words deny you, the people, the right of forming and avowing your own religious opinions, and so far they do well. But they accomplish their end more securely another way. For they say, unless you believe as *we* do, except you keep the faith whole and undefiled, we will denounce you as infidels, we will drive you from the communion table, we will raise the cry of heresy against you, we will set those of your own household at enmity with you, to the extent of our power we will cause you to be hated and avoided throughout the community, we will take your bread from your mouths, and your children's mouths, for we will say to the faithful, have no dealings with these men, buy not with them, sell not with them, go not to their dwellings, hail them not as brethren or christians! This is the kind of power which is now a-days put forth, to repress inquiry,

to restrain and fetter the mind, and break it down into subjection to its spiritual masters. And it is a weapon as powerful in its use and effects, as was the rack, imprisonment, or the stake, in darker ages of the world. The timid are alarmed. The prudent will not risk their name and standing. The lovers of peace will sacrifice every thing, *even the truth*, for peace sake. And it is a few only, a very few, who have the courage to stand forth and brave the storm. In consequence of this, as you may well suppose, truth has little chance; error is in some regions in a fair way to be perpetuated, the mind to sink into tameness and cowardice, religion to be shorn of all its manly beauty, and become the low, and abject, and despised and corrupt thing it was under the absolute reign of Roman superstition.—May God preserve us from so hateful a consummation; and give you, my hearers, and me and all who love him, the spirit of freedom to stand forth and defy spiritual power of whatever name or kind, and think and speak for ourselves.

But if it is our unalienable *right* to think and speak for ourselves, in all matters of religion; it is also our *solemn* DUTY to do so. It is a right which we may not neglect to exercise.

I fear that this is too little considered by most christians. Free and faithful inquiry after the truth as it is in Jesus, is too seldom proposed to their minds in the aspect of a serious solemn *duty*.—Men sit down indolently content with those religious opinions which they have received from their parents, from early education, from the influence of example, never taking the pains to compare them with the scriptures to see if they have *their* warrant; nor indeed so much as acquainting themselves with the grounds on which they rest. It is enough for them that they are held by an ancient, numerous, prevailing and respectable sect. Their faith is evidently a mere prejudice. It is not *belief* properly speaking, for they cannot be said to believe they know not what; at least it is not a *reasonable* belief, for they cannot state the reasons upon which it is founded, nor refute the arguments which are brought to overthrow it. They know that great corruptions have existed in the church, that there have been wide departures from the faith in Christ, that the majority has not *always* been right, that there are *now* many modes of belief that claim to be more pure and true than their own—yet they will not be induced to examine, read, or inquire in the matter; they are willing to live in the faith, and die in it, which they have never taken the pains to understand, or try by the scriptures, or know of themselves, whether or not it is of God.—But this is a high crime against religion and God the giver of it. It is a course of conduct for which we in vain seek a justification. And it is amazing that men who will be at infinite pains to study out every other subject, will not spare a day or hour for this.

But *a just self-respect* should engage us in this duty of free inquiry. Shall we consent to receive a set of sacred opinions on subjects bearing most closely on our present and everlasting welfare, on authority? Shall the mind inquisitive, and thirsting for knowledge and independant in its movements, on every other subject, be ignorant, indolent, or slavish on this? When we are so capa-

ble of discriminating between truth and error on the various topics of interest that occur, and are so jealous of undue influence, so fearful of arriving at wrong conclusions, shall we abandon the exercise of our minds on religion as if we were afraid to trust ourselves —or thought the subject unworthy of us, or stood in fear of others? Shall we not be ashamed to confess our subjection to a mass of opinions, not one of which we are able to defend, many of which we do not profess to understand, and all of which we at times confess that we are in doubt about?

A just *reverence, also, for God the giver of religion,* should urge us, my hearers, to the discharge of this duty of searching truth for ourselves.—God gave us our bodies in the intention that we should discover and apply all their various powers:—he gave us our minds to be cultivated and filled with knowledge; he has placed around us an infinite variety of objects that we might study them and learn their qualities and uses. And we truly reverence God, only when we fulfil his designs in these several respects. Is not our duty the same touching religion? This is one of God's gifts. He has sent his Son into the world bringing his will, showing us how we may secure everlasting happiness, and presenting to our consideration the most interesting and important truths. Can we manifest our reverence toward God in any way so well, as by striving to *understand* this religion which he has sent—to receive it precisely as it came from the lips of its blessed teacher? Will it be showing a proper respect for this great and invaluable gift, never once in the whole course of our lives, to study it with the purpose to know of ourselves what it really contains, whether or not we have hitherto *rightly* understood and valued it? It would seem as if we could not be guilty of a greater indignity to God the author of our faith through Jesus Christ, than by manifesting toward our holy religion as a system of *truth*, that negligence, indifference, inattention, with which so many are justly chargeable. If a friend sent us a volume which he had written on an important subject for our perusal and opinion, a *common* regard for him would lead us to study it faithfully, so as to understand it and be able to pass an intelligent judgment on its contents. Yet even this much are we unwilling to do by that matchless volume which God has provided and filled with his truth. We take our opinions from catechisms, and confessions of faith and creeds, while the word of God lies unexamined, unstudied. This should not be so. It is the duty of every conscientious man who knows the great differences of doctrine that obtain in the christian church, to examine what he feels to be his chance or traditionary faith by the bible, and see if it really has its origin there. We do wrong, I am almost ready to say, for a day—those of us who possess the means, to retain so tenaciously as we are apt to do, opinions which we have not *for ourselves* diligently examined and compared with the scriptures, to know if they have the warrant of the Saviour's authority.

Again, a *true reverence for the scriptures, themselves, and a regard for their directions relating to this very point,* should engage us in a free and impartial inquiry into their sense.—The scriptures

invite and challenge this inquiry. They do not require that we receive, blindly the sense that might first suggest itself, nor to be controlled by the opinions and decisions of others. It is a command of our Lord binding on all christians alike—"Search the scriptures; for they are they which testify of me." And again, the same head of our church says to us, "Why even *of yourselves* judge ye not what is right." And again, to warn us, as it were, against those who might strive unduly to influence us, or deter us from the exercise of our own judgments, he declares, "One is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." The same wise and liberal doctrine is held and preached by the Apostle of the Gentiles. "Let every man," he says, "be fully persuaded in his *own mind.*" "I speak as to wise men, *judge ye* what I say." "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." And Peter in like manner utters the sentiment—"May we ever be ready to give to every one that asketh of us a *reason* of the hope that is in us." So that if christians would obey the letter, still more the spirit of their faith, they would never think themselves excused from a careful searching of the scriptures, in order to know what they indeed teach, and what *they* are warranted in believing. And so far from free inquiry being chargeable with any thing bordering on the licentious or irreverent, it appears as if it were the only satisfactory mode of testifying our reverence and love for the sacred volume, and our gratitude to Him who provided it. He, who will take nothing for granted in religious matters, who has so exalted a conception of the authority of JESUS as the only head of the church, that he will not receive a word or syllable from man, whether in power or out of power, from councils, synods, fathers, or books, till he has first compared it with the teaching of Jesus and his Apostles, as *he* understands their teaching, who holds it to be his holy duty to think and believe for himself on so important a subject, and a duty therefore to read and inquire so as to know *what* to think and believe—such an one, is he who shows the truest reverence for the Bible, and its instructions relating to this very point, for the inspired men who wrote it, and for God who breathed into them their inspiration. To be afraid to hear, to read, to inquire, because afraid of the results—because afraid to believe differently—although truer, from what you now believe, is the extreme, and a sinful extreme of moral timidity—a state of mind truly irreligious, and which if universally prevalent whould be fatal to the progress of truth. If there are heresies which you stand in fear of, it is still your duty to inquire, that you may know how to refute them and draw others away from their error. If, haply, your inquiry should be the means of convincing you, that what you had hated and feared as heresy, is in fact the truth, you will never afterward feel disposed to regret that freedom of investigation, which had the effect to deliver you from the trammels of what you now perceive to be gross error. For, surely, it must be your first wish—as of every one whose spirit is a right one—to know and rest in the TRUTH whatever the truth may be; not in any particular set of doctrines which you might, perhaps, on many accounts, antecedently prefer.

Very many other arguments might be adduced to show the *duty* that is incumbent upon us to form our own opinions; and to this end, to inquire seriously, earnestly, freely of the scriptures, and then of every other source likely to throw light upon the subject and aid us in forming an honest and intelligent judgment. And it is by this process alone which I have now urged that we can hope to arrive at a knowledge of that form of sound words which the Apostle preached as containing the sum and substance of the Gospel. But let me add, it is of far less consequence that we should, as the result of our inquiries, actually receive the whole truth, in the form of words which we adopt, than that we should have possessed and fostered that disposition and frame of mind which led us to engage in the discharge of so important and urgent a duty. We may after all miss the truth, but we can never be deprived of the cheering consciousness that we have done our duty and an arduous one too. His merit must be far higher both in kind and degree—though after searching zealously and devoutly for the truth, he should at last sit down in the region of error—than that of another, who, we will suppose, by some happy fortune holds the whole and exact truth, but never made it the object of his anxious search.

Although therefore free inquiry should be admitted now and then to terminate in error, it will still have advanced the virtue of him who shall have engaged in it, *if it have been conducted in a right spirit.* The performance of the duty itself is a virtue, independently of its results. But error is not the usual or natural result of inquiry. Far otherwise, as the whole history of the human mind declares. In the sciences, in every branch of human knowledge, it has surely, if slowly, conduced to their advancement and the development of new truth. It has been the great instrument of reform and of progress. So it has been, so it must be in religion. In the sixteenth century, Luther, and Calvin, and their associates following the light of free inquiry, detected the rottenness of the foundations of the Roman church. But for the boldness and freedom of their investigations, we might to this day have been in bondage to the errors of that church. Let inquiry go on unrestrained, and other errors, equally, or yet more to be deplored, may be exposed and eradicated. Let inquiry cease—let it be obstructed—let it be discouraged—and those errors become perpetuated.

Unitarian christianity, like Protestantism, is the offspring of free inquiry. The same spirit of inquiry, the same love of truth that led to the one, has led, and will still lead to the other. The Catholic, we believe, who will resolutely use his understanding, will be convinced of the *unscriptural* foundation of the Roman church. And the christian who will freely and fearlessly investigate the Bible itself, will learn, that *that* form of sound words which usually passes for a just representation of the religion of Jesus, is not one half so much opposed to the deductions of right reason, as it is to the general tenor and the express language of the holy scriptures.

Free inquiry, then, you understand me to affirm, will conduct to those views of the Gospel of Jesus, which are usually denominated Unitarian. I firmly believe it will. I do not believe that a

man can go to the New Testament with a truly unprejudiced mind, willing to be convinced, and study it intelligently, and turn away an unbeliever in them. And it is because I believe that such would be the issue, and that such issue is unspeakably desirable to the best interests of the religion of the Saviour, to its reforming and saving power, that I stand here to say a word in behalf of free inquiry, and to entreat those who will be entreated, by all their love of truth, their regard for the scriptures, their reverence of God, their gratitude to Jesus, to go into a humble and teachable spirit to the scriptures, and try by *that standard* what they have been accustomed to hold as the sound words of the Gospel. Why should not the TRUTH be known and prevail? I am sure of nothing more, than that you, my hearers, would love to know that *true* christianity, as it actually fell from the lips of the Saviour was universally understood and universally prevalent. If you were convinced that orthodoxy, as it is termed, was *not* christianity, I am sure, that none sooner than you would be ready to abandon it. I pray you to look into this matter. A very large—I may add a very intelligent and a very growing body in the christian church, denies that the prevailing christianity is true christianity. They think that they ground the denial on an ample, *sufficient*, unassailable foundation of scripture evidence. I only desire that the merits of this important question may attract your attention and that of the community at large. I shall not fear for the result.

But you reasonably ask, what are the distinguishing tenets of that system which it is believed approaches so much nearer the true faith in Christ? I will detain you a moment longer while I briefly recite them.

That form of sound words, to which I believe free inquiry will conduct you, will not comprise any thing very different from the following articles of christain faith. It is distinguished as you may know by the term Unitarianism, or Rational Christianity. We care not for the name. The *thing* designated by it, we believe to be the *true Gospel of Jesus of Nazareth, the anointed Son of God.* But we do not object to the common name—it is a just and descriptive one. A Unitarian is one who believes in the strict unity of God, in opposition to the Trinitarian, or one who believes in a three-fold or tri-personal God. A belief in this primary article, confers on him who holds it, the name of Unitarian. But this does by no means imply, that on all the other various topics of religion, he necessarily thinks alike with all those, who, together with him, adopt this general appellation; any more than that all those who go by the general name of Trinitarian should be supposed to believe alike on every other point, as well as on that of the nature of God. Trinitarians are some Catholics, some Protestants, some Calvinists, some Arminians, some Lutherans, others Methodists, Episcopalians, Universalists—yet all Trinitarians. Even on the doctrine of the Trinity itself, they are not agreed; some being Athanasians, others Sabellians; some explaining it one way, some another. Very few even uniting in the same exposition of that very mysterious dogma. So it is with Unitarians; though they substantially agree, they do not hold it essential to believe in all things

alike. Each inquires and believes for himself, or ought to do so. Yet from the general outline of doctrine which I shall give you, very few would dissent.

On the main point however—the unity of God and the derived existence and power of Jesus Christ—there is among Unitarians one and the same identical belief. They unite in holding the opinion, that God is one—in one person—that the Father is the one, only self-existent, infinite, all-perfect, all-gracious Deity. They believe that this one God manifests himself toward us in different ways and in different relations. He is our invisible creator and supporter. He has, through his ancient prophets, often held communication with man concerning his moral welfare and his future well being; and by Jesus Christ he has spoken most plainly on these most momentous subjects. Through *him* he is our redeemer from the bondage and punishment of sin; and he daily and hourly visits us by the refreshing and sustaining influences of his spirit. We do not believe, for we do not think it scriptural to believe so, that because Deity sustains to us these different relations, he is therefore comprised of three distinct and almighty persons.—We think it is the one Omnipotent Father who works *with* us and *for* us in our creation, redemption, and sanctification—in our creation, immediately by himself—in our redemption, by the Mediator Christ Jesus—in our sanctification, by those influences which from himself he chooses to shed abroad.

We do not reject the doctrine of the Trinity, because we cannot understand it, but because we cannot find it in the scriptures. If it were there, mysterious and dark though it might be, I am sure we would receive it with all our minds and hearts. There are many things which we cannot understand in creation and providence, for they have not been revealed to us. *This* doctrine, if we found it plainly, undeniably in the scriptures, we should regard as *one* of these unintelligible things in our present state, and with present capacities, above and beyond our comprehension, and we would receive it in faith as such. But we can find not the faintest traces of it in the sacred volume. And I would add, not finding it in the first place in the Bible, we do gather an additional argument against it in the fact, that no explanation of it has ever yet exhibited it in such a way, as on the one hand to be clear of the charge of Tritheism, or on the other, to be any thing different from pure Unitarianism.

In the next place, we believe in JESUS CHRIST and his DIVINE COMMISSION AND AUTHORITY—that he was the *Son of God* in the scripture meaning of the words; that he was not *God the Son* in any sense of the phrase. We believe that he came from God, commissioned by him, filled with his power and wisdom, to teach a new and better religion; and by his instructions, his example, his sufferings, death and resurrection, to save a sinful world. We believe that he was abundantly proved to have come from God, and to have acted with his authority, by the miracles which he did, and which no man could do, except God were working with him. Thus we give to the laws of the Gospel the obedience and reverence which are due to the laws of God—for they *are* his laws.

Its authority is the authority of God. The religion of Jesus is the religion of God; for he inspired and sent him. Its salvation is the salvation of God. If we live by the Gospel we are confident that we live according to the will of God our Father—if we die in the belief and practice of its truth, we know that we die in the happy assurance of the acceptance and mercy of God. It is upon the mercy of God, declared in Jesus Christ that we found all our hopes. We think it a strong and ample ground; sufficient for the comfort of life; for hope and peace in death, and the salvation of eternity.

Yet you have heard that we reject Christ—that we deny the Lord who bought us!

Reject Christ! Deny the Lord who bought us!

We reject the droctrine of the SUPREME DEITY OF CHRIST—we deny that HE WAS THE ALMIGHTY GOD. We deny that he who was born in time, was a helpless infant, and grew in favor with God and man, was the self-existent Jehovah. We reject the horrible idea that the creator and sustainer of the universe died upon the cross. This is the sense and the only sense in which Unitarians deny and reject Christ, and this denial and rejection of him they hope and pray may become universal in the church. But the rank of Jesus in the scale of being has nothing to do with the AUTHORITY and DIVINITY of his RELIGION. The *authority* of Jesus—the *divinity of* his MISSION, not his person, is the important point. The word of salvation is as powerful and as true if brought from God by an angel, or an inspired man, as if brought by God in person. Jesus came, and showed that he came from God, by the god-like works which he did; his miracles confer upon him the authority of God—his religion therefore, has all the authority and value we could desire. A king sends a messenger, with proper vouchers of his authority, to a rebel subject in a distant province, and proclaims to him by the mouth of the messenger, a free pardon on certain conditions. Is not the message as full of joy and salvation to that rebel subject, by the mouth of an accredited ambassador, as if the king had gone in his own person? Is not its authority and value precisely the same as if the sovereign had himself delivered it? Can the rank of the messenger affect one way or another, the nature of the message? This represents exactly the state of the case in relation to the office of Jesus, and the message which he brought. His message of salvation is, and must be in the nature of things, wholly independent as respects its value, of his rank as the bearer of it. That salvation is as joyous and as true, the Gospel is as precious, on our principles, as on those of the highest orthodoxy.

Be not deceived, my hearers, by the use of equivocal language. When you hear zealous and heated preachers say that Unitarians deny the Lord that bought them, do us—and them too perhaps—the justice to understand them to say and to mean no more, than that we deny and reject the doctrine of his supreme Deity—we deny that he was and is the Almighty God. This representation of us will be just and true; any other will be false. In the DIVINITY OF HIS RELIGION, that it CAME FROM GOD and WAS ATTESTED BY MIRACLES, we are the firmest believers, and have ever been, as a

sect, its staunchest defenders against the Atheist and Deist. I will in this connexion merely mention the name of NATHANIEL LARDNER, whose volumes are to this day—and must long be—the great store-house of learning and argument, from which christians of every name draw their weapons for the defence of the christian religion. And this man was a Unitarian.

Again, we believe in the Holy Spirit of God—that as the phrase is used in Scripture, it stands for the influence of God shed upon man—not for a divine person distinct from the Father and equal to him, but for the power and wisdom of the Father himself. These were imparted freely to the Apostles and disciples in the infancy of the church, and they were enabled to work miracles. We believe in the secret but felt influences of the Spirit of God upon the hearts of men. We cannot indeed say "Lo here, or lo there"—for as the wind bloweth where it listeth and we hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth—so of the Spirit of God we cannot trace or detect its workings; but we believe, for we are plainly told, that they are abroad in the world sanctifying and saving the souls of men.

Again—further—We conceive that God stands to us in the character of Father—that when he forgives our sins, he forgives of his own free, *unpurchased* mercy. We think that the conditions of acceptance with him are repentance and a holy life. We cannot find in the scriptures the doctrine of God's arbitrary election of mankind, some to everlasting happiness without foresight of the existence of good works, or virtuous life; and his reprobation of another portion of them to everlasting perdition, also without regard to moral character, but in consequence of a decree that went forth in the beginning. We cannot, in a word, find any of the doctrines of Calvinism in the Bible; which seem to us to rob the Deity of every attribute not only of love but much more of justice.

Believing that the whole language of scripture from beginning to end, goes to show that God bears the paternal character, and that the gospel conditions of salvation are repentance, reformation, and the actual possession of real holiness—that God's mercy accepts our imperfect virtue, and pardons our unconscious errors and forsaken sins—We reject the doctrine of the atonement as it is called, or the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, as being wholly unscriptural,—contradictory of other plain and undeniable truths, and wanting all support in the express language of the Bible. According to this doctrine, God saves us, not of his own free mercy and because he loves us, but because his Son, a God like himself, and a part of himself, has benevolently stepped forth, and by suffering a life of pain on earth in a human form, and dying a death of agony upon the cross, has borne in his infinite person, and through his infinite capacity and suffering, the punishment otherwise to have been inflicted upon all mankind for their sins; and having thus satisfied the divine wrath and justice, which were bent upon our ruin, has in fact *purchased* our salvation, bought us off from everlasting death. The *Father* is thus stripped of his attributes of love and mercy. He does not forgive in any sense. He is represented as inexorable, stern, wrathful, and does not remit his anger towards us, till it has been fully satisfi-

ed by the vengeance wreaked upon an innocent and almighty sufferer. This is the true doctrine of atonement. But it gives a character to the Deity totally opposed to those representations of it which are set forth in the New Testament, particularly in the parables of our Lord, as in that beautiful and affecting one of the prodigal son. But we reject the doctrine, not merely because it seems at variance with all our ideas of abstract justice, and the scripture accounts of the character of God, but chiefly because we perceive the doctrine to be destitute of a sufficient foundation in plain unambiguous texts of scripture.

If it be asked then, what power and efficacy we ascribe to the death and sacrifice of the Saviour? I answer that some think that the very strong scripture expressions relating to that event, seem to ascribe to it a *peculiar* efficacy which they do not pretend to understand or define, but that generally a *moral power* is ascribed to it and no other—a power of the same kind, though exhibited in a different way with that which belongs to his life—his doctrine—his example—his resurrection. His death was necessary to the confirmation of his doctrine, and the proof of his divine mission; it was essential to his resurrection from the dead, without which we should have had no better knowledge than before, of a future existence—and it was therefore permitted to take place. By it we are furnished with the highest motives and incitements to virtue of which we can conceive. Jesus has died and risen from the dead, and shown that his truth was from God. He has died and risen from the dead and thereby opened to our astonished view the eternal world, and invited us through the obedience of his laws, to enter upon that world of glory and joy. If we are not to be wrought upon by motives like these, if they are not powerful enough to save us, it would seem as if no other motives of which we can now conceive, or could have been proposed to us—short of depriving us of our moral freedom and *compelling* our virtue—would have been able to rouse and save beings so senseless and so gross.

Once more.—We believe in a future life of retribution. When we shall receive according to the deeds that have been done in the body—when to all them that have obeyed unrighteousness, shall be rendered indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish. The christian doctrines of the retributive character of the future existence, we hold to surpass every other doctrine of christianity for its practical and moral value. Any other truth we think may more safely be doubted or disbelieved than this. The Scriptures we think lay especial stress upon it. We are therefore firm believers and defenders of the truth that the sinner will be miserable now and forever, if he retain—as being a moral agent it would seem he may do—a mind alienated from God and the love of virtue—that so long as sin remains in him, so long will he endure that necessary hell which it creates and which itself is.

Unitarians are universally—it is not known that there are any exceptions—observers of the positive institutions of the gospel, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. These it is thought rest upon the express command of our Lord and are universally binding upon those who take his name upon their lips.—Of the value of the insti-

tution of the Sabbath, of the importance of its devout and punctual observance to the moral welfare of society, and to the existence and growth of a pure, powerful, and saving religion, none in christendom can entertain deeper convictions than they, and from none does the day receive a more cheerful, careful,and strict observance.

In the last place,—Unitarians receive the Holy Scriptures as the divine rule of faith and duty—and *from them draw every doctrine which they profess to believe.* They believe the Scriptures to have been written by inspired men, who were enabled to record the whole truth, who did record nothing but the truth. They would bow in all things to their authority and rejoice daily in the salvation which they have revealed in Jesus Christ.

Thus have I presented you, my hearers, a brief outline of the principal tenets by which Unitarians are distinguished. Subordinate ones, I have not thought it worth while to notice, especially as I have already exceeded the reasonable limits of a discourse. I will now only add in conclusion, that the opinions which we thus embrace, we regard as eminently, and beyond all others, *scriptural;* as unspeakably important to the growth and progress of religion in the world; as vastly more favorable than any others to the promotion of pure morals and a true and exalted piety; as likely to be far more effectual, when they shall prevail among men, to their moral regeneration and the salvation of their souls. This we think of our faith, and it is because we think thus of it, that we are most anxious to see it spread, and that men should yield their prejudices at least so far as to give it a fair and patient hearing, and a candid judgment. All we ask or wish is, that christians would think and read for themselves on this great subject. All, indeed, for my own part, I would ask of any christian is this, that he would take the New Testament in his hand, and study it by itself, with a mind open to conviction; read it through and through with particular reference to these controverted points, and when he has done, ask himself, if he has found such evidence, either in kind or degree, as to satisfy him that the doctrines which he has hitherto, and which are commonly received as christian ones, are really taught in the New Testament.

We think it important that the TRUTH should be known. We would use every means therefore to promote, not primarily our own opinions, but a spirit of inquiry, a general love and regard for truth. And I beseech you, my hearers, not to believe as I do, but to maintain a candid and inquiring mind; to resolve in your hearts that, as far as in you lies, you will hold the truth as it is in Jesus, and that to this end you will seek and cheerfully receive knowledge and light from every quarter. I pray you to be ever willing to receive the TRUTH, whatever the truth may be discovered to be. And as God grants nothing without our labor and co-operation, I beseech you to search the Scriptures daily to know whether these things are so; that you may have the happiness to hold the very "form of sound words" which Jesus preached to the Jewish, and Paul to the Gentile world. And may God, the God of truth and light and love, guide you to a knowledge of the truth, give you all joy and peace in believing and sanctify you wholly through our Lord Jesus Christ.

RELIGION A PRACTICAL PRINCIPLE AND A SENTIMENT OF DEVOTION.

ECCLESIASTES, 12. 13.

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.

When the question is asked, what is religion? the answer naturally divides itself into two parts; the one, relating to belief, the other, to practice; or to the influence which belief, or faith ought to have on the whole conduct of life. Faith, is treated of first, because it is on the doctrines which we hold of God, his will, and the future life, that we found all moral obligation, and build our theories of practice. It is because we believe so and so, that it becomes our wisdom and our duty to pursue this or that course of conduct. If we had no knowledge of God, his will, and a state of future retribution, to do one's duty, would be to do as one pleased. But having this knowledge, possessing it in the same clearness and certainty that we do any other kind of knowledge, we are no longer at liberty to act according to our own wills, but in conformity to the sovereign will of that God who, it is our settled conviction lives, and will judge us at the last day, by the laws, which through Jesus Christ his son, he has vouchsafed to impart to us, for our guidance and salvation.

Let us attend now for a few moments, not to the inquiry—what constitutes our belief—when we ask the question, what is religion? —but to the other consideration, namely, what ought to be the practical influences of religion on the conduct of life. We each of us have what we call our religious belief—our religious convictions; we acknowledge the excellence and obligations of religion—we reverence it—we hope to be saved by it—there is no possession we would not sooner part with—what restraining and guiding influences ought these deep convictions to exercise over us, during the course of every day, while engaged in its duties and exposed to its temptations?

None surely are so unreflecting as to entertain the idea, that religion is a thing for one day in the week alone—that it consists *wholly* in specific acts of worship, public and private, either on the Sabbath or during the week. None can suppose that such acts of themselves could have any power to accomplish—what all will admit religion was given for—our deliverance from all sin and impurity of heart and life, and our preparation for a higher sphere of existence in other worlds. None who conceive justly of the *end* for which we have been furnished with what we call *religion*, can believe for a moment, that it is possible that end should be attained by our going through any number of religious acts, or by giving to

religion any separated and distinct portions of time. Surely on the other hand; if we once admit the general idea, as we all when we think of the matter do, that it is the design of religion by the influence of its hopes and its fears, to purify and perfect the whole man; to raise him from all that is evil to all that is good, to make him in a word *worthy* of immortality—we then admit at once also, that religion is a thing for *every moment* of life, and for every place, that it is to rule over the world within and the world without, that it is to guide and control us in our thoughts, in the common and ceaseless duties of life—in our intercourse with our fellow men, in our public and private employments, in what pertains to ourselves, to others and to God, to time and eternity—And this, my friends, I believe we all admit and feel to be true of religion, that it then only accomplishes its great purpose, when it is a universal rule of life and duty, when it is our only and supreme authority in every act of our lives, and in every decision of our minds.

Let us pass to a few particulars; not so much to point out what religion *is*, and prescribes, as if it were any thing new—we all know our duty and what religion requires—but that we may once more be reminded of what we are but too apt to forget—the true extent of the province of religion over the common affairs and duties of every day.

1. In the first place, then, what is religion, as it respects the heart? What has it to do with our thoughts—affections—purposes—and the whole kingdom within? Know ye not, says an Apostle, that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy. Religion *then* answers its end, when by its influence over us, it keeps this temple pure; and it is *nothing* to us, and has done nothing *for* us, if this temple of body and soul has not been kept by its power, a fit tabernacle for the spirit of God to dwell in. All would be well with us, if we would keep the heart with all diligence. If we would but allow religion to have its proper authority over our hearts, to take full cognizance of what is going on within, if we were content to expose to its scrutiny the most secret places of the breast, submit to its judgment all our feelings, thoughts and purposes—all the rest would be easy. We should then go out into the world and encounter its temptations strongly guarded from within—with a stock of moral courage and religious confidence in ourselves, which no duties, or dangers, or temptations would be able to exhaust or overcome. It is this power and influence of religion in the secret chambers of the soul that lies at the foundation of a virtuous and religious character, and enables a man to act his part in the world boldly and safely. Yet religion—and that too which is thought, and called good religion—often exists without possessing this internal intimate power over the heart and affections. There is a religion that seems to consist wholly in believing—then the religion of the church—of the Sabbath-day—of outward conformity to the customs of society—it may and does often exist in these forms without ever going any farther; without ever reaching the heart or reigning over the whole inner man as it ought. But till it thus

reigns, till its authority is thus carried within, is it not deprived of the most important region of its empire? Is it not a comparatively defective and useless principle?

Can we believe that, while the affections are left unguarded to fasten on lawful or unlawful objects as may chance, while the passions are uncontrolled, while envy rankles in the breast, while a revengeful temper prompts to acts of retaliation, while anger is quick and violent, while we harbour thoughts of evil and uncharitableness, that religion is exercising its proper influence over us? That we have any notion what religion *is* and was intended for, if we imagine, that although these vile passions *are* unrestrained, we are yet sufficiently religious, because we are not neglectful of what are called the outward observances of religion? If we do, we sadly deceive ourselves. We have entirely misconceived the nature and province of religion. For who does not acknowledge when he reflects, that our moral and religious state will be estimated by the Infallible Judge and witness of action and thought, according to what we are at *heart*, not in outward action and form—according to what we are in the actual state of the feelings, affections and principles; and that if we are wrong here, we are necessarily wrong every where. It will surely amount to nothing in our justification, that we have through life been able to keep up a good appearance, if our *heart* has all the while been alienated from God and holiness, if it has all the while been the seat of every low and corrupt desire—We are not then, and we cannot be under the proper influence of religion, so as to be the objects of God's complacent regards, who sees through every disguise and false appearance, if the heart is not ordered and sanctified according to its strictest laws. The state of the soul is not a healthy one, till religion first rules with supreme sway within, and the outward life then keeps with it sweet harmony.

2. The relation which we bear to ourselves, is the closest of any. After this comes the relation in which we stand to a family; and in regard to a family, religion is the only *true* religion, when it keeps the parents in the proper discharge of their duties to children, teaches children their duties to parents, and in a word, makes of the whole household an orderly happy community. And those parents and children are totally destitute of religion, they are mistaken if they think that they have any, if it has not produced these fruits. But is this true? How many then stand condemned! For how many are there who run hastily from church to church and pass night after night in the labors of prayer, and can never have enough of what has been rightly called religious dissipation, and are often times accounted saints in the eyes of the multitude—who leave their families in cold and nakedness and want; or are at home domestic tyrants—the slaves of passion and of vice—whose household is any thing but one of order, love, peace, or even comfort. *"If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an Infidel," which is as true as any other verse in the Bible, and *ought* to be as

*1 Tim. v. 8.

much regarded. Who, if he had only studied the Gospels, and had learned from *them* the nature and demands of christianity, would believe that man to have a *christian's* faith, to be a disciple of Jesus, whose family was treated with neglect or cruelty, whose children were left to go forth unprotected by well established principles into the midst of the world and temptation, whose own temper and habits were such as to plant sharp thorns in the bosom of her whom he vowed to love and protect, and to afford a fatal example of evil to the ready immitation of his unhappy offspring—who, I say, would believe such an one, on comparing him with the christian precepts and spirit, and our great Example, to be a *christian?* And he is not one. Although some systems of religion, if he have faith and zeal enough, will still allow him to be one—he is declared by scripture to be an Infidel, and worse than an Infidel. And *we* feel that he is so, though his faith may be such as to remove mountains! Is not the unbelieving man, who has denied the faith, but is at home a kind husband, a careful and fond father, watchful of the welfare and comfort of his whole household, and studious that none beneath his roof, or within the limits of his power shall suffer wrong, or shed one tear of sorrow—is not he, before men and God, a better man than the christian, the christian saint, who forgets the ties of nature, tramples under foot the peace of his household? They are not to be named together in the same moral scale, they are not to be mentioned together for all that may become a man and do honor to human nature. And if it is God's glory, that his tender mercies are over all his works, that his own bliss springs from the communication of happiness to others, and if it is man's duty to imitate in this particular, the divine perfections, then is it certain that with God in judgment, such an Infidel will be the true christian, and such a christian the real Infidel.

But surely—none can be so infatuated as to think that religion is confined to reading and meditation and prayers and churches; and is excluded from the precincts of a family—does not either approve or condemn the conduct and manners of the heads and members of a christian household in their domestic intercourse. None can be so deluded. Practical religion—*true* religion—after a man's own heart, has *most of all* to do with his domestic relations and duties. And if one were asked, what is *true* religion, he could not answer better than by pointing to a family ordered after the benevolent spirit of the Gospel, in which the parents are solicitous for the welfare of the children, teach them betimes the fear of God, form them to virtuous habits, and are withall an example to them of the virtues which they inculcate—where the children are pure, gentle, obedient; where love, harmony, and happiness preside from day to day and from year to year—he could not answer better than by pointing to such a family, and saying, *there is true religion*—there are the very effects produced which God designed—there the influence of christian principles and belief has produced the best human virtues, and resulted in the highest state of human happiness, and that is precisely what religion was intended to do. You do not see any signs of that religious fanaticism which is so often mistaken for religion—you

witness no religious extravagancies, though you do witness a proper notice and practice and love of religious duties ; but above all, you witness the abundant and heavenly fruits of religion, in the purest virtues of heart and life.

3. Again, *true* religion is a practical controlling principle of action, that goes with us into our business, our occupations, our trades, our professions, and keeps us in the fear of God, and teaches us to do faithfully the particular duties which our calling imposes on us.

It is a strange idea and most unwarrantable, that would separate religion from the duties and labors of life and confine it to the thoughts, to churches, to seasons of retirement and meditation. Where is religion most needed? Is it not where the work to be done is greatest and strength weakest? And what is religion given for? Is it not to be a rule of life and conduct—to deliver from evil and lead to good? To save from error and sin, and guide to truth and virtue? And where is this rule most wanted but where life possesses the greatest variety, its duties are most arduous and entangled, and where conduct is most likely to go astray? When alone, and secluded, we can with comparative ease keep ourselves in the way of duty, but in the midst of men, tempted on every side and every moment to abandon rectitude and purity, it is *then* that we need the strong support which religion lends. It is then that man needs most the light, the guidance, the comfort and the strength of true religion.

Religion is therefore for business, for action, for duty at large, for the bustle, interests and stir of the world, and not alone for privacy and the recesses of the breast. And when thus going out with us upon the broad theatre of active life, it should not go merely as a devotional sentiment, an emotion of the soul toward God ; it should not remain in our breasts actuating only our thoughts and warming the affections, it should be with us as a rule of universal duty, a practical guide, and a high principle of honor, in the midst of the innumerable difficulties and temptations that beset the way of man in the pursuit of his livelihood, and the discharge of official duty. We often times speak of honesty, honor in business, integrity, faithfulness, fair open dealing, industry, perseverance, diligence, and other kindred virtues, as if they were something distinct from religion ; very desirable and necessary indeed—but still something distinct from religion—whereas, rightly considered, they are religion itself. They are those very features in conduct and character, absolutely essential to the order and stability—nay the very existence of society—and which religion was given to create and sustain in all occupied in the intercourse of trade, or holding important stations ; which, if it *does* create and sustain, it here too answers its end—if it does not, it fails to accomplish the great design of God in its gift, no matter what other fruits it may have to boast of. Shame to the man—who, wedded to the speculative subtleties of some antiquated creed, will maintain that faith toward God and zeal in his worship will atone for the misdemeanors of busy life, and are what religion consists in, and all that need be given to it. Conscience, if he would but listen to it, would preach him a better religion—common

sense if he would reflect, would make him blush that he had yielded for a moment to so stupid a delusion. "What profit is it to the Almighty," ask the scriptures, "that we pray to him?" And how, we may ask in the same spirit, how is it possible that we can atone for the *ill conduct* of life by giving to God *that* which on their *own* account he has declared he does not value—namely, our prayers; and which he requires and accepts only as they shall have the effect to strengthen and nerve us for the conflicts of active life—the resisting of temptation, the discharge of duty. "What does the Lord require of us but to do justly, to love mercy and walk humbly with him." It were a far surer sacrifice to offer the severe virtues of life, as an atonement for the neglect of what are called religious duties, than to offer *these* for the neglect of *those*. But there are not wanting in all our communities, many, who, like the old Pharisees, imagine that their prayers and praises, and singings, must be an offering of a sweet odour to God, though they are in the daily habit of neglecting the commonest virtues and duties, even indulging in odious vice. Need it be said to such christians, if christians they can be called, that their prayers and praises are an abomination—an offence unto God—that every prayer offered in this spirit, is a new weight of sin upon their souls? *"Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." †"Go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice." ‡"Wo unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and annise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the others undone."

In its proper application to the employments and offices of men, true religion produces those steady convictions of accountableness to God, which lead to an upright, and as near as may be—perfect discharge of every incumbent duty. In the man of business then, true religion is unsuspected integrity—fair dealing—abhorrence of every semblance of, and approach even to fraud; for these virtues are essential to the existence of trade, which God himself has appointed as an occupation for man, a necessary means of subsistence, of civilization and improvement. To violate these virtues is to defeat the purposes of Heaven, to resist the power of religion. For let these virtues be wanting, not in one only or a few, but in many in the mass of the trading community, and society could no longer exist, it would fall in pieces through mutual distrust. To the man of business, therefore, the particular province of religion is, to make him in the full extent of its meaning, an HONEST *man*; and if it fail in this, whatever else it may have done for him, however it may have exalted his affections, drawn forth his religious charities, it has come short of its chief aim and most important purpose.—In like manner religion, *true* religion, in the various laboring classes of the community is industry, perseverance, good habits, fidelity, and

* 1. Sam. 15. 22. † Matth: 9. 13. ‡ib. 23: 23.

honesty in work abroad, and economy and order at home; and *these* can never be *religious* or *good* men, approved of God and their own *enlightened* consciences, while these homely virtues are wanting, though they should devote all their leisure, and much of their other time, to "new-moons—fasts and solemn meetings." In the higher professions, the same principle holds good. In the Judge, religion is, impartiality, knowledge, learning, conscientious and just judgments. In the Lawyer it is faithfulness to the interests of the client, in the whole extent of their mutual transactions, so far as those interests are coincident with truth and right.—In the teacher, true devotion of his whole power and energy to the good of those committed to him during the hours of labor.—In the Physician, a humane and conscientious application of knowledge and skill, to the relief of those who put their trust in him.—And so of every other occupation and office, we are then, and *then only religious* men, when we perform faithfully those duties which society, and therefore God, requires of us and display those virtues that seem peculiarly to belong to our particular calling.

You of course, my hearers, do not understand me to say, that when religion has produced these virtues, in the various classes of men which have been named, it has done *every thing* for them—accomplished its *whole* work—but only that they can have no religion *without* these virtues—that it is all a most wretched mistake, or detestable hypocrisy to make a parade of *religious sentiment and duties*, if the virtues in question are wanting. A man must be religious in his *life* before it will be of any avail that he is religious at church.

But in the last place—True religion should not only operate within, purifying the heart—it should not only control us in our families and make of domestic life a scene of order, peace and virtue, it should not only be with us from morning to night in the business to which we devote ourselves and keep us honest and diligent—it should also keep us in the constant and cheerful performance of the duties that have respect to God. That deserves not the name of religion which overlooks or in any way slights the duties which we owe to the Author of our being.

To Him belong the duties of worship and obedience. That obedience of him is most perfect when it keeps us in the strict performance of those duties to ourselves, and one another, which have just been specified, and in which the keeping of his commandments, as they are set forth in scripture, chiefly consists.

The worship of God is also enjoined and makes a part, and most important part of practical christianity. Its importance cannot be over-estimated, so long as it is kept distinct from enthusiasm and fanaticism, is not allowed to monopolise all the time and thoughts, and is made the means of forming and sustaining a stern uncompromising virtue. He who prays always, who thinks that religion *consists in acts of devotion*, and in that belief secludes himself from the world, and gives himself to a life of prayer—who looks upon prayer and worship as the *end*, and not the *means* to a nobler end, namely, human virtue—man's moral exaltation, sadly misconceives,

it seems to me, the nature of religion, and falls essentially into that error which built the monastic piles of Catholic Europe, and crowded them with a herd of lazy, and in many instances, scandalously vicious devotees, and was one main cause of the corruption and debasement of christianity. But so long as devotion is restrained within its proper limits, so long as it is modeled after the perfect and sober example of the Lord Jesus, its importance *cannot* be overrated as a means of fostering and creating the purest, and loftiest virtue. To create this virtue, we may well say that prayer, public prayer, family prayer, and private prayer—are the indispensable means. He who lives without any sense of God, of his relation to him—holds no intercourse with him—lives with no reference to a union with him hereafter, and therefore without open, secret, or even mental prayer, *will not, cannot rise* to great virtue, for he is without the necessary impulse—the only impelling and improving principle. That man's other virtues—his integrity--purity—sincerity—benevolence--honesty, will possess in themselves but doubtful stability, and will claim but little respect or confidence from others, who is known to forego and neglect the duties which he owes to his Maker. Prayer is the life of virtue, its animating principle—its foundation and its defence.

I have thus stated as briefly as I could, what I conceive to be a true idea of the nature and objects of the religion of the Gospel, so far as religion is a practical principle and a sentiment of devotion.

Do you, my hearers, conceive thus of the nature of religion? Do you thus carry it into the life, even to its minutest duties and employments? Do you thus keep it seated in the heart, the controller and monitor of every secret thought and wish? Do you thus regard it as the bond that unites you to God, and in the observance of its injunctions and in its spirit, often rise to him borne on the wings of faith and prayer? Oh! that it were so! Oh, that the religion of Jesus wholly prevailed and governed our hearts and our lives, Oh, that we made it our highest aim to follow after, and imitate the virtues of the author and finisher of our faith!—I fear, however, that but few of us exhibit the power of religion in its every province, and show that we are under its sanctifying influences every day and all the day.

Do you never find, my friends, when you examine yourselves in the resolve to know the exact truth, that you in fact yield to religion but a very limited and feeble sway? Do you not find that it is your habit to keep religion out of sight in regard to certain parts of your behaviour, and restrict it too much to certain formal and stated duties, and forget that it should be the universal, divine rule of *all* your actions and *all* your thoughts? Is your temper, for example, under its control? Do you really and practically admit that in order to be *religious* you must be gentle, kind, forgiving, promoters of peace, and the happiness of those around you—that you cannot commit a greater offence against religion than to indulge a *bad temper*, by unkind and harsh language to inflict a wound on the sensitive mind, to resort to little acts of retaliation and revenge in social and domestic intercourse? Do you feel as you know that

you ought to do, when you consider what religion *is*, and was given for, viz. the training of the soul for heaven—that it keeps your hearts and imaginations pure and uncorrupt, that it saves you from sin even in the secrets of the breast, from which the observation of man is shut out? Do you find that it wholly and supremely rules your hearts as much when you know that man does not, and *cannot* penetrate your thoughts and motives, as when you are acting in open day and in the gaze of the world?

Again let me ask, if your religion is conscientiously carried into your families, if it prescribes your duties as parents and children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, in the whole circle of them? Does it make you faithful, affectionate, gentle, in your entire intercourse? Are you in no respect chargeable with that wretched mistake of placing religion almost wholly in religious service—of making church-going, prayer-meetings, and other extraordinary religious acts, substitutes for a severly moral life—atonements for any breaches of your moral duties? Finding it an easier thing to be remarkable for your attendance at various religious meetings, than to be irreproachable in duty and every virtue, than to deny yourselves or control your passions—have you never satisfied yourselves with doing the first to the neglect of the last? I would not imply in these and similar questions, that any regularity or blamelessness in the common duties of life will excuse your neglect of religion and its offices—that a decent life will warrant you in restraining prayer and forgetting God—that it is enough, and all religion demands, if you are good citizens. God forbid. I say I would imply no such thing. Nothing—no considerations can plead his justification, who refuses the homage of his heart, and the incense of prayer and praise to the Creator of his frame—the Father of his spirit—the sovereign disposer of his being, the bountiful giver of all his blessings, the gracious source of all his immortal hopes. I would only lift up a warning voice against the delusion, which certainly is not an uncommon one, of imagining that *all* religion is to be confined to religious exercises—to the church—the Sabbath and particular seasons. It is not rare to see and know men and women, who would almost turn pale at the mention of a heresy in faith, who give themselves the air of persons absorbed in religious contemplation, who would on no account be absent from a season of prayer—who would not heal the sick, or do a deed of mercy on the Sabbath-day—who yet after all do not carry religion into practice—who do not scruple in business to cheat and oppress, in their families to indulge a peevish or violent temper to the absolute misery of all about them, to neglect the moral education of their children, to speak evil of their neighbours, to be guilty of personal excesses in sensual indulgence. Yes, there have been horrible examples, I fear within the knowledge of us all, of men, of public professors and ministers even of the religion of Jesus, who have thought so much of the all-sufficiency of a true and ardent *faith*, and a flaming zeal in doing what they have called God's work—as if his work could be any thing different from a pure and obedient life—that they have forgotten to look after their morals, have forgotten even the decencies of

ordinary virtue, and have not, so faulty has been public sentiment on the subject, drawn upon them the indignation of a christian community. O, there is no injury done to the cause of true religion, like that which its professed friends and ministers do it, when, what they say with their lips, and by a sanctimonious demeanor, they contradict by their lives. Even the vilest sinner that pressed on the steps of our Lord, did not inspire him with one half the indignation with which he spurned from his presence the hypocritical Pharisee—the man who devoured widow's houses, and for a pretence made long prayers. The world has in every age been cheated by men who beneath the garb, and in the name of religion, have been guilty of the most nefarious crimes, the cruelest oppressions. A moral —a severely moral life, must be made the test of the sincerity of religious professions—of the *real* orthodoxy of a man's creed, or there will be no end to the deceptions that may be practised upon us, and which we may practice upon ourselves. Let us remember that religion is so far and no farther, *true* religion, than it acts as a moral, practical principle. If one form of christianity, acts more efficaciously as such, than another, it is so far preferable and more likely to be *true* christianity. But no form of it is true, or if true, worth anything—if the case can be supposed—which allows, or connives at an immorality, or speaks slightingly of the worth of the virtues.

But do you ask, what is the principle that will most surely engage a man in that life of daily duty and virtue, in that universal holy living which I have described as only *true* religious life—I answer—*Faith in Christ*—faith in the salvation of Jesus ; *that*, and *that* alone will infuse into a man that bold, resolved, persevering spirit that will make him equal to all the trials of life, and carry him successfully and cheerfully through them. To live temperately, charitably, holily, devoutly—to deny on principle the appetites and passions, the moment they are about to pass the bounds of moderation, is no easy task, and to do it, it needs that we be impelled by some most powerful motive. Such motive is alone supplied by that faith in Jesus which teaches us that we are immortal, which reveals to us a true idea of the greatness of our nature and the glory of our destination, which teaches us that the character of our being for eternity will be determined by the life on earth—that virtue or the love of God must be seated in the soul as a habit, and a settled choice before heaven can be entered or enjoyed—that the *sinner*, whatever may have been his creed, will meet the just indignation of God—that the *good man*, he who has feared God and kept his commandments, whatever may have been *his* creed, will find the favor and see the salvation of God. Faith in Jesus, which thus sets before us the favor of God, the joys and salvation of eternity as the prize of our high calling is alone of potency sufficient to engage us in the severe and hourly toil and watching of a godly life.

But this is amply sufficient. Cold and dead must his heart be, who with a christian hope, cannot deny himself and live the life of a christian. Dull and earthly must his soul be indeed, who in the certain expectation through Jesus Christ of a resurrection from the

dead and an immortality of ever-increasing bliss, ever growing knowledge, cannot for a few short years keep on that strait and narrow but plain and beaten way that leadeth unto life. If we ever truly weighed in our minds, and understood in our hearts what is meant by *eternity*—ETERNITY OF HAPPINESS, it would seem as if an hundred times the toil and trial of this present life would be nothing to undergo for a possession so glorious. If there is any thing that absolutely oppresses the heart by the magnificence of its bounty, any thing that seems almost incredible in religion, it is, that such a creature as man, should after so short a trial as *earth* exposes him to, be thought worthy to tread the courts of heaven, to be numbered among the angels of God, and hailed the heir of an eternal inheritance.

Let us feel, christian friends—the greatness of our destination. Let us say that there is nothing which religion requires us to do, which we will not do—or to bear which we will not bear, to secure the mercy that is proffered.

Let us beware how we mistake in so important a concernment. Let us remember that God is purity itself, that we must be holy as he is holy, before we can see him in his glory. Let us make our religion a principle of holiness. Let us abandon it on the instant if we be not able to sanctify the heart and reform the life. *That* faith in Christ we may rest assured is false and fatal that makes the sinner easy in sin, that provides substitutes for personal virtue, which holds righteousness to be as filthy rags—that carries not the consequences of a man's bad actions into eternity. Let us believe that man cannot be happy here or hereafter, in earth or in heaven, without fixed habits of personal righteousness. He must love virtue and its service for its own sake, before he can see God. If he leave the world without this love, no matter what other love he may have, he has ensured his own ruin. No faith—no zeal—no participation in another's righteousness can save *him*, however through life they may have been the ground of his trust, who is not righteous in himself. "The soul that sinneth IT shall die." "The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon *him*, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF UNITARIAN CHRISTIANITY.

ROMANS, 14. 17.

The kingdom of God is not meat and drink but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

In almost every instance in which the phrase, Kingdom of God, occurs in the four Evangelists & the book of Acts, it is used to stand for that new kingdom of righteousness and truth which was to be established by the Messiah, and of which there was to be no end. It bears this meaning in our text. The Apostle arguing against the importance of days, meats, drinks, and all mere ceremonies, and advocating the doctrine of perfect liberty in regard to such things, which he esteems as in themselves indifferent,* says—in effect—the kingdom of God—the christian religion which I am recommending to you, is not a system of ceremony, of new moons, fasts, and outward forms—it does not consist in such things, it does not lay stress upon them, as some Jewish teachers would persuade you to believe. This new religion consists in righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Its great aim is, to make men righteous and just and pure in their lives, and fill them with a divine and holy joy in believing. And in the verse which follows the text, he goes on to say, that "he who in these things serveth Christ"—that is—is possessed of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost," "is acceptable to God and approved of men."—Christianity has in him produced its proper, its intended results—whatever ceremonies he may have observed or omitted. And yet, my hearers, notwithstanding religion is thus plainly stated to consist in righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, it has by foolish men, been made to consist in every thing else but righteousness, peace and joy. One form of christianity has laid chief stress upon outward ceremony and parade, and the *spirit* of religion has been lost through a minute observance of what has been supposed to be the *letter* of its instructions. Another has laid the principal stress upon belief—faith has been held to be of more value than virtue—it has been thought safer to believe right, than live well. Another has made undue account of the observance of days and seasons; and has regarded him as the true christian, who should be pharisaically scrupulous in keeping particular days and adhering to certain prescribed forms, though he should be known to break the rules of justice—honesty, purity, and temperance, rather than him, who, while conscientiously observing the instituted rites of religion, would prefer, on occasion, to forego *their* observance, than be guilty of an immorality, or omit a deed of mercy. Christianity has assumed many

*Romans, 14. 5. 6. Col. 2. 16.

other different forms, and each has been marked by its distinctive features. While they all resemble one another in many important points, they differ also in many, some approaching nearer to the original doctrine of Jesus, others departing farther from it. I would now ask your attention, while I present some of the characteristics of that form of christianity, which is believed most firmly by those who embrace it, to coincide with the faith that was once delivered to the Saints—to retain all that is true and valuable of other systems, while it rejects their errors. You understand me to refer to Unitarian christianity. Its principal doctrines have already been named and described; its practical nature has also in some measure been unfolded. I would now notice more minutely a few of its most essential characteristics.

I. I would observe, then, in the first place, of this system of christianity, that it is eminently a *scriptural* system.

1. It is rightly termed scriptural in this respect, that it receives the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as its divine rule of faith and practice—a rule furnished by the same God who made and preserved us. We receive the scriptures with all gratitude and joy as containing the will of God, which by various prophets he has been pleased to communicate to his children. The Bible—is the source of all those bright hopes that reach forward beyond the grave; without it, we were again involved in heathen error and darkness. We regard it, as a volume written by inspired men, who had a perfect knowledge of the things whereof they wrote. We look to it as the book of universal ultimate reference among Christians, in all things pertaining to faith and salvation. We do not believe that human reason, unaided from above, though the world had stood for ages, could ever have elicited the truths that stand forth in letters of light on the pages of this holy volume. Wiser men and mightier intellects we might never expect to see, than those which immortalised the ancient republics of the world; and whatever the human mind could achieve alone, we may suppose was achieved by them. But their philosophy never in its brightest meridian could be compared for value to the mere twilight of revealed truth, and in the full blaze of the gospel discoveries, its light is but darkness. Take the crowning doctrines of revelation, the character of Deity as our Father—a future life—and the conditions of salvation, and we may say that reason, uninspired reason never approached the truth, and we may feel confident never could have done so. They are doctrines wholly beyond its reach. Revelation alone is competent to teach mankind with authority on such subjects—subjects which imply a knowledge of the very mind and will of the invisible unapproachable Deity. Men may speculate and conjecture, but they can never *know*. It is to Jesus who was in the bosom of the Father, that we owe all our knowledge. It is to Jesus and his revelation, that we owe by an infinite proportion more than to all the world of philosophy. It is in his gospel—in that little volume, that we find doctrines of grace, of hope, of consolation, which the world beside could not supply, and which the reason of man, never could have discovered.

2. Unitarianism, is eminently a scriptural system, again in this respect, that it makes the Bible alone its creed.

Many sects frame for themselves long lists of articles, which they hold to express better and more clearly than it does itself, the meaning of the sacred volume. And unless the Christian shall say that to these articles, he can and will unequivocally subscribe his belief—they will not admit him into their number—he may not sit with them at the communion table, is refused perhaps the christian name and denounced as an infidel. Unitarianism admits of no such control over the faith of another. The Bible is its creed; and whoever declares that he receives that book, as the book of divine revelation, believes enough, however he may differ in the interpretation of passages contained in it, to entitle him to the name and privileges and rights of a Christian.

But do not Unitarians therefore, on an hundred disputed points have and hold their peculiar opinions? Certainly they do. And often have these opinions been put forth in the form and under the name of a creed that men might know what they are. They value their peculiarities as much as any sect in the church, and are as desirous to see them prevail, and as zealous in propagating them by all fair and honorable means. Indifference to truth or sluggishness in the duty of defending it, and proclaiming it abroad are not among their faults. They are in this respect it is believed, active and ardent as any. But here they conceive, is a difference. They hope and believe that they are not in any sense of the word exclusive. They are willing to *call and believe* every one a Christian *who thinks himself to be one*, however he may depart from *their* conceptions of Christian truth. If in any instance they should decline an interchange of ministerial offices with those of a very different faith, with the Catholic—the Calvinist—the Universalist, supposing it to be desired on the other side, it would in no case involve questions, touching a right to the christian name, but simply of general expediency and utility. They hold these different sects to possess large claims to the christian name, because they themselves put forth the claim and think it a valid one. But it does not follow that therefore the difference of faith is nothing—or but little—or not a matter to be regarded, or that it would be wise or profitable that their pulpits should be common.

3. Again, it is a scriptural system, from expressing its principal tenets in the very words of scripture; which seems to be warrant at least of so much as this, that so far it can contain no error; for the propositions which the scriptures lay down in express, distinct, intelligible terms must be true, and preferable on every principle to doctrines embodied not in scripture words, but in obscure and equivocal propositions of human construction, the terms of which have ever since their invention, been the subject of endless disputation.

The title to the christian name, for example—is said in *scripture* to be derived, not from believing this or that particular doctrine—that of the Trinity or the dogmas of Calvin supposing them to be scripture doctrines,—but simply from receiving Jesus as the Christ or Messiah. The Eunuch said "I believe that Jesus Christ is the

Son of God"—And on that confession an inspired Apostle baptised him, and hailed him christian. Paul says, "if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." So says and so acts the Unitarian. He takes the plain declarations of scripture for his rule on this great point of discipleship and does not refuse the christian name, or baptism, or the supper, to any one who declares his belief in "Jesus as the Son of God"—as *he* understands the proposition—and believes in his heart that God hath raised him from the dead. But not so with the other principal sects. This scriptuarl rule they will not observe; they tread it under foot; they set up rules of their own; and without the shadow of authority from their Master, erect their own several standards of faith, crowded with minute and subtle distinctions, in which they demand a full and unreserved belief before they will concede a right to the christian name. They require that another, not only receive the scriptures according to *his own* understanding of them, but in *their* sense, in the meaning which *they* attach to their language. This is far from scriptural.

Again, on the great doctrine, which relates to the mode of God's existence, Unitarianism is scriptural, because it expresses its faith in the very words of scripture. "And Jesus answered him and said, Hear O Israel the Lord our God is one Lord." In a solemn address to God, he again says, "and this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Paul says, "To us there is one God the Father, by whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ." And again; "For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." These sayings of Jesus and his Apostles, the Unitarian takes for his creed on this important doctrine. He is satisfied to do so, for he receives the very words of scripture in their plain, obvious, only signification. But you need not be told that the Trinitarian is compelled to abandon scripture, to find the language of his creed. Where in the scriptures, I will not ask does he find the word Trinity, or the word *three* in connexion with any of the names of God, but where does he find any thing corresponding most distantly to the proposition "in the unity of the Godhead there be three persons of one substance, power and eternity, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost."—Or to this, "There be three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost and these three are one true and eternal God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory." The Bible, from Genesis to the Apocalypse contains no language that resembles this. It is as foreign as another tongue from the phraseology of the sacred volume. The only verse which ever did *sound* like a formal statement of the Trinitarian's fundamental doctrine—that of the three heavenly witnesses in the first epistle of John,—has long since been abandoned by every respectable controvertist on both sides of the question as "indisputably spurious." But even that verse, much as it is now either esteemed or regretted, was never viewed by such a man as John Calvin, as teaching or implying any thing

more, than that the Father, Word, * and Spirit agreed, or were one in their testimony. "The Apostle," says that reformer, "in saying these three are one, refers not to their essence, but rather to their consent. As if he should say, the Father, his eternal word and the Spirit, with one consenting voice, do equally bear testimony to Christ".

4. Unitarianism, is a scriptural system, again, because it follows so scrupulously what appears to be the *general tenor* of the sacred volume.

We regard the observance of this rule as a great preservative from error. We may easily err in interpreting a single verse, or word, but we scarcely can, in saying what is, or what is not the general doctrine and language and purport of a whole book, or of a number of books. We may not, for example, be able to say with great exactness, what is the true meaning of the phrase, "Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you," or, "I am the bread that came down from heaven," but nothing can be plainer to the unprejudiced mind, than that the books in which those expressions are found, are in their general tenor and language and their other plain and undeniable doctrines, wholly opposed to such a doctrine as those passages are thought by some to teach, viz. that of transubstantiation. Any man would justly be pronounced weak and not to be argued with, who should ground on one or two passages of very doubtful meaning at least, so tremendous a truth as that of the real presence,—not only not countenanced, but rejected by all the rest of the books. It would be far more rational to conclude that the single or the two passages were misunderstood, than that several entire books, should with *their* exception, maintain a profound silence in relation to so remarkable a dogma.—So in regard to the Trinity. Out of the four gospels and the book of Acts, only one solitary verse can be drawn that will bear to be adduced as teaching, or hinting at the supposed fact of there being three persons in the Godhead! And that, is the form of baptism in Matthew, "Baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." And even here, if one had not learned the doctrine of the Trinity first elsewhere, he would never be led,—we may confidently suppose,—to suspect its existence in the verse in question.—He would see no reason to infer from the verse itself, that the Holy Spirit was a person, and not an influence, as it is so often elsewhere said to be; that the Son, was the Almighty God and not the *Messiah*, which is the true equivalent expression; he would find nothing said about the equality of the Son and Spirit with each other, and with the Father,—nothing about these three infinite persons, being *not* three Gods, but by a mysterious union only *one!* He would find nothing of all this in the verse itself, and the verse does in fact, neither assert nor imply any of these things; and yet—which is my observation,—and yet, in all these five books, containing express histories of our Lord and what their writers no doubt regarded as a full and sufficient account of his preaching, and of that of the first

* "Quod dicit tres esse unum, ad essentiam non refertur, sed ad consensam potius" &c.

disciple too, this is the only verse, which is adduced even by Trinitarians, as containing the doctrine of the Trinity, or even alluding to the asserted fact of there being three equal and almighty persons in the Godhead—now this is most remarkable. It is wholly unaccountable, and totally incompatible with the truth of the doctrine. It is utterly incredible that the Evangelists should have written those gospels and the acts, without teaching plainly and often such a doctrine as that of the Trinity, if they themselves believed it, and believed it, as they must have done, to be of the last importance. If true, it would have appeared every where, and been inextricably interwoven with the whole texture of the sacred histories. Suppose one were to write a life of Newton and leave out the circumstance that he was father of what has since been called the Newtonian System, or, of George Fox and never give a hint that he was the founder of the sect called Quakers, or of Wesley and forget to allude to the fact that in conjunction with Whitefield he gave rise to the denomination of Methodists; or suppose these lives to be written and these several circumstances be *named*, but *not made the main subjects of biographies*, and would it not be beyond utterance extraordinary? Are not the cases so monstrous as not to be supposable? And yet their improbability hardly approaches that of the case which has actually occurred, if the doctrine of the Trinity be true, that the Evangelists should write so many express and independent lives of Jesus and give no account of his having taught the doctrine of the Trinity, now regarded as the corner stone of his faith, and as remarkable every way in religion, as the doctrine of gravity in Physics, and as unlikely to be omitted or slighted—or at least, should only casually and obscurely allude to it in the form of Baptism.

II. In the next place, I would remark of Unitarian Christianity, that it is a rational system.

1. But how rational? Rational in this sense, that it is built on reason independently of scripture? you may have heard so. But what has already been said must be enough to show you, that all such charges are unjust, and that Unitarianism is a system arising wholly out of, and resting wholly upon scripture. All the truths which it embraces, it receives from the scriptures alone, and values them only as they are revelation, and far beyond the reach of the human mind. It receives not a single doctrine which is not a revelation of Jesus, not one on the ground of its being a doctrine of reason and *not* of scripture.

To be sure Unitarians use their reason in forming their opinions, and in learning the true sense of scripture, and how should they come at its meaning at any meaning without employing their minds? And where shall the line be drawn up to which the reason may be innocently used, and beyond which its use shall be abandoned as criminal and a proof of carnal pride? And what sect of christians is there that does not use their reason in forming their opinions? Not one. All christians, hold the opinions which they do hold—those who hold them intelligently—on grounds which reason has built for them out of scripture. They have adopted their creed whatever it may be, after a process of reading and thinking in which

reason has been their guide. Unitarians do no more. *Their* minds conduct them to one series of conclusions, the minds of others conduct them to another. Each and all use their reason in precisely the same way, and with the same great object in view, the discovery of truth—the ascertaining the sense of scripture. I do not say, that all christians employ their reason to the same extent in religious matters. A vast many are of course governed by authority, or take their faith through education or fromfeeling, or interest or by chance. I mean that all those of other sects, even the most orthodox, who stand highest for intelligence and learning, form their opinions in precisely the same way, and by a use of the same means that Unitarians do. They reason, and then believe; they reason *till* they believe. We do no more. And how else should we or others believe any thing, but through the conviction which argument works in the mind. We cannot worthily believe, but as we understand the merits of the question, we cannot do this but by inquiry and a patient application of mind. If it be a reproach, then, that we use our reason, and that in *this* respect our faith is a rational one, it is a reproach that we covet, and one too that we share with the eminent and conscientious of every sect in christendom.

Besides if it be criminal to reason about christian doctrine, is it not still more criminal and presumptuous to reason about the truth of the christian religion itself? And yet does not every intelligent christian erect himself into a judge of this whole religion, and on a view of its evidences external and internal accept or reject it? And is any man ever blamed for thus using his reason? Is it not a use of it which God demands at his hands, which it would be criminal to refuse? Could a revelation from God ever be received but by such use of it? But the question arises, may we thus sit in judgment on the whole religion and not on its parts? May we reject the whole or not, as it approves itself or not to the reason,—as its evidences appear sufficient or insufficient,—and in doing so, do the will of God, and may we not do the same by the *doctrines* which that religion professes to contain? surely we must. We must receive a doctrine, as the religion itself, according to its evidence—according to the foundation which the mind perceives it to possess in revelation and in reason.

2. I have said that Unitarianism is a rational system. This seems to imply that it is so eminently and in opposition to other systems which are not so, or less so. And this is another respect in which I term it rational. It is rational in a *higher sense* than the prevailing systems of christianity. Its doctrines are such universally, that the objection that they are irrational, can in no respect be brought against them. They are few and simple, and intelligible, yet as we believe, sublime, powerful and saving—equal to the wants of human nature and the sinful state of the world. It contains not a single doctrine of which the christian is compelled to say, "I cannot understand it—I cannot explain it in such a way that it does not involve a contradiction, but if I must believe it, or renounce religion itself, I will prostrate my understanding before it, and take it to my creed." Unitarian christianity enjoins on the be-

liever not one doctrine that calls for this renunciation of the reason. I state this merely as a *fact* in relation to the system I advocate. I do not say that it is a sufficient objection to the prevailing christianity that it contains doctrines at "which reason stands aghast and faith herself is half confounded." I do not say, nor would I imply, that we reject that christianity solely on the ground that we cannot reconcile it with reason. For we do not. If christianity in our view—at least so I think myself—contained doctrines which were not easily or fully reconcileable with reason—if such doctrines were distinctly laid down in clear propositions, and we were plainly told that this was but a partial glimpse of the truth—as much as we could now bear—that we must mean while receive it, and wait for futurity to clear it up and remove apparent contradictions—if such in our view were christianity, we would I am sure receive it, and adore the inscrutable purposes of God. But we cannot find such distinct statements of the prevailing mysterious doctrines of christianity in the New Testament—we can find no precept, making it our duty to believe in what is unintelligible and inexplicable, but as we think, precepts of the very contrary spirit. All I would be understood to do, therefore, is to state the *fact* that the system which I advocate is one that the mind can easily and fully comprehend—it is in every respect rational, or in accordance with human reason. This implies that the prevailing christianity is not so. This too is as unquestionably a *fact*, that it is not a rational system. It contains doctrines which the mind in vain attempts to understand and explain. The unfortunate consequence of which has been, that multitudes have on this ground alone openly, or virtually renounced the christian religion altogether. They have regarded it as a sufficient objection to the divine origin and the worth of a religion, that it contains unintelligible doctrines. And without searching to see whether christianity actually contains such doctrines, but taking the popular faith for the true faith, have inconsiderately rejected revelation. Very many have on this ground become sceptics, who, had the Gospel been presented to them in that rational form which we hold to be its true and original form, would have rejoiced in believing.

III. In the next place I would remark of Unitarian christianity, that it is a liberal system.

1. We ourselves term our faith *liberal*. We often denominate christianity as we receive it, liberal christianity. This is a word that has both a good and a bad meaning. We use it in opposition to exclusiveness, bigotry, uncharitableness, bitterness; not in the sense of loose, free, easy and licentious; not because we believe our faith to be more indulgent to sin than the opposite system, for we think it to be far less so, and chiefly value it on that account. But I would be more particular.

We say that christianity as we understand it, is liberal in this respect, that we allow to others the liberty which we claim for ourselves. If we claim the privilege to think and speak for ourselves in matters of religion, and hold it an injury to be hindered or overawed in this duty by threats, harsh treatment, or rude denunciation,

so we would never employ these means of influence over others. We would not, if we could, prevent a single individual from thinking, speaking, or writing as he pleases about christianity, if it must be done by alarming him for his reputation, his business, his prosperity in the world. We would leave our neighbour to his Bible and his conscience, sure of our respect and affection whatever creed he may adopt, so long as his life is that of a sincere christian. We will, indeed, as opportunity serves, by plain and fair statements, show him what we deem a purer christianity, but if he rejects it, in the same spirit of sincerity that we offer it, our christian love and respect shall be diminished, not a jot; the last course in which we should think ourselves justified in, would be that wrathful, vindictive exclusive treatment, and those who do not see as we do, which shame to tell, is so prevalent in this free and protestant land.—It is disgraceful to the age, that it is necessary so much as to name these obvious principles of christian toleration.

2. It is liberal too in this respect—that it does not hold that mankind will be condemned in the judgment of the great day, merely because they have not entertained a certain belief. We say that if a man is sincere in his opinions whatever they may be, if he has conscientiously searched for, and adopted them, and then acts according to his convictions, he is safe now and always. We cannot separate from our fellow christians because we believe that on account of their faith, be that faith what it may, they are the objects of God's present and everlasting condemnation.

Unavoidable conscientious errors of faith, we are persuaded as we think on ample scripture ground, that God will overlook, and we therefore, feel not warranted to denounce. We do not think a true faith, of so much importance that men will perish everlastingly if they do not chance to hold it. If we did—if we did adopt this belief as so many of our christian brethren do, I do not see how we could do otherwise than give all our time, and the whole of our estates, and every energy of our minds to the great work of converting the world to *our* faith, as the only means of saving them from damnation. But we believe no such thing, we do not see how others can belive it. And we think their amazing apathy and unconcern shows that they do not at heart believe it. But because we do not conceive that absolute truth is essential to salvation, and that sincerity is every thing, are we therefore indifferent to truth, careless about it? Far from it. We believe our views of the Gospel to be most important, most interesting, most useful as they are most true—and as far preferable to every other form of christianity, as truth is to error—and we resort to every justifiable means to present them to the consideration of our fellow christians. But we would not be so carried away by zeal, as in doing this to disturb the peace of a congregation or community, or produce the impression any where that except others believe as we, "they must without doubt perish everlastingly."

3. Unitarian Christianity is not liberal in this sense, that it is an easy system to the sinner, and gives him to understand that sin is a light evil. It is in this respect the very reverse of all that is easy.

it insists upon the absolute necessity of personal holiness to the salvation of the soul. It insists, in strict accordance with scripture—that "the soul that sinneth it shall die"—that is—that unrepented, unrelinquished sin shall prove the destruction of the soul—that he who would see life, must found his hope on the purity of his own heart, the rectitude of his conduct and the mercy of God as declared through Jesus Christ. The substitutes which all false religions—and also what we esteem false forms of Christianity, have so industriously provided for personal virtue, sufficiently declare, that of all the demands of religion *that* is the hardest to meet. It *is* the hardest. It is easier to believe whole volumes, to go through a thousand ceremonies than to conquer one potent besetting sin. Yet Unitarianism provides no substitute for this labor. It asks and it will have personal righteousness, the abandonment of every evil habit, the love and practice of virtue for its own sake, before it will give any assurance of salvation. No one can resort to Unitarianism in the hope of finding a loose and accommodating religion; or whosoever does, shows himself sadly ignorant of the nature and requirements of the system.—And I would go on, in the spirit of these remarks to say of Unitarian christianity that it is in the

IV. Fourth place, a remarkable close and severe system.

1. It is so on that much disputed point—human ability. Unitarianism, in conformity as we believe to christian truth—insists that man has power inherent and native, to do the will of God; not perfectly in this present state, but so as to secure the favor of God who will demand of us only according to the strength which he originally imparted, and the circumstances in which he has placed us. We believe that no native depravity can be pleaded in excuse of man's moral delinquencies and the alienation of his heart from God—that to the absence of no supernatural influences can he lay the fault of his sensual, sinful mind, and his unconverted heart. His irreligious mind, and his wicked life, in whatever proportion the one is irreligious, and the other wicked, are his own, his own work, his own crime. We confidently believe and we earnestly preach, that man can and must do of himself, impelled by his own holy desires and lofty aspirations, all that is necessary to the purification of his own soul—that if he does not do it, it will not be done—that no sovereign power will be put forth to save him who will do nothing or not enough to save himself. Every one we hold, by watching, by self-examination, by the reading of the scriptures, by prayer, earnest, constant, importunate prayer, by the energy of a will bent on effecting its purpose, may accomplish the work of his own moral regeneration. Upon this system, there is no escape from intense, untiring individual effort.

2. This is a close and severe system, also, in respect to the necessity of personal holiness and the importance of a good life. Unitarianism, admits of nothing in the place of personal holiness. No other qualities—no other gifts or graces can compensate for its absence. It teaches no doctrine that by even the most ill-disposed can be so tortured as to connive at, or excuse a godless life. It maintains that the love of God must be seated and fixed in the soul by a man's own endeavours, and must influence and actuate him al-

ways,—in all the duties and employments of life—not on one day of the week alone, but every day, and hour, and moment, not only his actions, but his words and the thoughts and purposes of his heart. He must dwell in God and God in him before he can be his. His flesh with the lusts and affections thereof must be crucified before he can be Christ's. He must by faith and virtue while here below, have already as it were lived in Heaven, ere he can die in the hope of its salvation.

And we accordingly chiefly object to the prevailing christianity, because it opens a wide door to the entrance of moral evil, because of its comparative laxness and license in a moral view, because of its doctrines so easily perverted, or so naturally understood in such a way as to countenance sin, and encourage the heart of the sinner in his destructive course. To say that men are* *totally depraved and morally helpless* till called and renewed by a divine influence, seems to us to encourage moral and religious indolence, to prevent religious efforts, to hold out a bribe to religious unconcern. For it may be said by him who wishes to escape from the duties of the moral and religious life, "If I am totally depraved by my birth I am not accountable for my actions. If all men are naturally indisposed to, and incapable of all good acts and thoughts, if this natural inability, this implanted perverseness accounts for the sinful inclinations which I feel, and I *cannot* do any thing for myself—I shall attempt nothing. I shall wait till the influences of God are shed down upon me to renew and save me, and mean while I shall sin on." Thus may the obligations of personal effort and virtue be evaded, and to many a mind fairly, conclusively evaded. To say again, with the common system of christianity, that men are† chosen to salvation from all eternity without regard to personal character and attainment, but by a perfectly irrespective election, and that others are in the same way reprobated to eternal damnation, is, we think to strike at the root of personal righteousness and responsibleness.—And, once more, to say that Christ has suffered in the *stead*‡ of sinners, that he has suffered and died *in*

* "From this original corruption, whereby we are all utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good and wholly inclined to all evil do proceed all actual transgressions." "Their ability to do good works is not at all of themselves but wholly from the spirit of Christ." "Works done by unregenerate men—are sinful and cannot please God and make a man meet to receive grace from God." Westminster confession. "Original sin, is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby every man is of his own nature inclined to evil, and therefore in every person born into the world it deserveth God's wrath and damnation." "Works done before the inspiration of the Spirit—are not pleasant to God—have the nature of sin." Ninety nine articles.

† "Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid—hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory out of his mere grace and love without any foresight of faith or good works or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creation moving him thereunto." "The rest of mankind God was pleased to pass by and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sins, to the price of his glorious justice."

‡ "Those whom God effectually calleth he also freely justifieth, not—for any thing wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them as their righteousness; but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them." "Christ by his obedience and death did fully discharge the debt of all those that are thus justified, and did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to his Father's justice in their behalf." "Yet inasmuch as he was given by the Father for them and his obedience and satisfaction accepted *in their stead*," &c. Westminster Confession.

their place, to satisfy the claims of divine justice,—that *he* has borne the punishment due to sinners, and that they shall be saved by the imputation and transfer of his righteousness, is, again we think to sap the foundations of christian morality—to take away every motive to personal effort and virtue. All these various doctrines we regard as so many inlets of sin, and warrants for its safe commission. We think them to be in direct opposition to the whole spirit and purpose of the religion of Christ. We think that christianity was intended to operate as a series of powerful motives to induce man to put forth his whole strength in the great work of purifying and perfecting his own nature and fitting himself for his immortality, and that its worth to mankind arises in the degree in which it is able to effect this great purpose. The doctrines alluded to, are calculated in our view, as far as doctrines can do it, to defeat this great purpose. They give man essentially to understand that salvation is somewhat independent of his own exertions—that if he is to be saved God will save him in his own time and way.

3. Unitarianism is a severe system, also, in its views of the importance of piety to the christian character.

It does not allow that a moral life alone, is enough for the christian. A man may be a good man and yet not a complete and proper christian. He, we think, forgets the highest and most interesting of his relations, who does not look upon himself as the child of God, and cultivate the sentiments that belong to that relation. He omits the most urgent, the most useful, the most exalted duty, who neglects that of habitual prayer to the Being who dispenses all the happiness of life, and in whose hands our destinies are, and to resemble whom in that holy likeness which prayer begets in the soul, is our highest glory. He does to himself an unspeakable injury, deprives himself of the most efficient aid in his religious and moral warfare, robs himself of one of the chief satisfactions of life, who lives without God in the world, who does not go to him by daily prayer, who does not draw nigh to him often, very often in the silent, secret communion of the heart. We believe that virtue has no auxiliary like prayer. We cannot think that it will be able successfully to withstand the assaults of temptation if it be not animated by the spirit and power of prayer. He who lives in the presence as it were of God, who often returns to the world and the scenes of active duty and trial new risen from his knees, will have on his mind so lively a sense of his relation to God and futurity that he will not, he cannot sin. He will act on a broad and high principle of duty to God and his own immortal nature, and will feel that nothing is to come in competition with his anxiety for the future and eternal welfare of his soul, and he will be steadfast and immoveable. Unitarians, in this particular, are in the habit of proposing as a model never to be lost sight of, the character of our blessed Lord. The piety of Jesus lay not in a fearful observance of prescribed forms, but in the divine and holy and settled temper of his soul. He was not neglectful of appointed seasons—he often retired for acts of private devotion—he passed whole nights in prayer to God—yet no one was ever farther removed from a formalist, or enthusiast. He scru-

pled not to break the Sabbath, as the Pharisees deemed it, if by doing so he could better accomplish a benevolent or useful purpose. He enjoyed the innocent pleasures of life—he mixed in various society—he was no ascetic or recluse. Yet who ever could doubt the reality, the depth, the godlike ardor of his piety? We would have ours to be like his. We would teach it to keep the same calm, equal, and reasonable way. We would never see this delightful, chief of virtues changed to dark and narrow spirit. We would not in the endeavor to become pious, lose the gentleness, the benevolence, the cheerful temper that belongs to our nature. We would not that the religious man should place his piety in a high and inaccessible enthusiasm, or in strange abstinences, or in refusing the common duties and the innocent intercourse of life. For then he would depart from the only true and safe model—that of the Saviour; who loved God indeed, with filial devotion, but loved man too with more than a brother's love—whose meat and drink it was to do his Father's will, but who never omitted the duties which he owed to the world—whose heart and hopes were in heaven, but who ever remembered, that while on earth, earth had its claims.

4. Unitarianism is a severe system in its views of future retribution and the punishment due to sin.

It teaches the truth of a certain, dreadful, and universal retribution, taking place in the future life and reaching on into the ages of eternity. It teaches that man—every man shall suffer the just punishment of his sins, that the iniquity of earth shall be visited upon him in a sad reversion of future woe, such as on earth he was never able to conceive—that sin in its own nature is a principle of misery and pain and while it exists in the soul will be to it an exhaustless source of unutterable anguish—that in the future stages of the soul's existence, when the sources of false comfort which the sinner can resort to here are withdrawn, and the mind turns in upon itself, and then keenly feels the amount of its loss, the madness of its godless life on earth, and memory runs back with a horrible fidelity to all the evil deeds of that life and brings them fresh before the mind, and the imagination paints happy pictures of those blissful regions of peace and joy fast by the throne of God, where his people dwell and friends and kindred are gathered together in an eternal society, and it is known that this is all forfeited and gone through the power and pollution of sin—it teaches that, then, then will be developed in the soul a new principle of pain, whose power the tongue of man cannot describe nor the heart conceive. This system teaches that these consequences of sin are universal—irremediable—inherent in the very nature of things, and that the law of gravity could no easier be dispensed with, or suspended, or supposed absent, than that eternal law that binds sin and misery together, now and forever. What extraneous sources of suffering there may be to the wicked in a future state, as well as what extraneous sources of happiness there may be to the righteous, we say not, for scripture seems to contain no distinct revelation; and it is vain to speculate minutely, concerning those things which are placed beyond the impenetrable veil that shuts the future from our sight. But of the re-

ality of a dreadful and unerring retribution we are the strenuous, universal advocates and conceive no truth to be so essential to the moral well-being of society and the salvation of the soul. We deprecate every thing that by the remotest tendency goes to diminish the depth of man's convictions of this momentous doctrine. He is so in love with sin, and so earnest to discover some way by which he may indulge in it, and yet be saved, that we deeply deplore any representations of God's mercy and compassion that make him too merciful and compassionate to inflict pain, or which go to lessen in any way the sinner's apprehensions of the rigors of his justice. "We would have men think of God as a benevolent being, but we would also have them think that their future fate depends on his justice. Let him be regarded as a merciful Lawgiver, but a righteous and inexorable Judge."

I have thus my hearers, presented to your view as I proposed, some of the characteristics of Unitarian Christianity.

If they have never been offered to you before, I cannot suppose that they will at once meet your approbation; for they certainly are at great variance with the prevailing system. But I feel confident that if you meditate upon them, and render them familiar to your thoughts, above all, if you will faithfully compare them with the scriptures, with our Saviour's preaching and the spirit of his blessed doctrine, you will find them more accordant than you now believe them to be, with the features of christianity as it came from our Lord himself. I am even persuaded that by a due consideration of the subject, you would find them completely to harmonize, and at last entirely to coalesce with the features of the glorious gospel as it stands recorded by its first disciples and evangelists.

Unitarian Christianity, we steadfastly believe to be pure christianity, as it came from Jesus himself divested of the errors which time, the superstitions, the hopes and fears and craftiness of man, have connected with it. We are therefore most anxious to see it prevail; and to that end to find those who are ready to examine and weigh its claims and if admitted, bold to avow and defend their convictions. If it were merely a system of philosophic or speculative truth about which we differed, we could not feel thus interested and engaged. But believing in our hearts, that the peculiarites for which we contend are vitally essential to a higher state of morals, piety, and religion in the world, that they are to be the means under God, of destroying the strong holds of error, superstition, and infidelity, and of building up the church of Christ in a holy temple, where truth and love shall forever dwell and reign together, we dare not intermit any effort, nor refrain from any course of action that shall seem likely to hasten so desirable a consummation—And may He who is the source of all truth lead us to a knowledge of the truth and pour its comforts into our souls and bring us by its sanctifying power to a likeness of the children of God and to the inheritance of an eternal glory through his infinite mercy in the Saviour.

A

SERMON

ON

THE COMMUNION.

PREACHED, MARCH 6, 1825,

IN THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN THE CITY OF NEW-YORK.

BY WILLIAM WARE,

MINISTER OF THAT CHURCH.

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The following Discourse was preached as two Sermons, but, as the subject is the same, they are thrown together.

SERMON.

JOHN XIV. 21.

"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me."

THE only true test of discipleship with our Lord, is the keeping of his commandments. He demands the love of his followers, but not that of the enthusiast, the fanatic, or formalist. He would have the sober, equal affection of those who keep his sayings, and do whatever he enjoins. His affection for his disciples, and his love of mankind, were manifested, while he was among us, by action. He went about doing good; he laboured, watched, prayed, endured suffering and reproach, and in the end, laid down his life for his friends. In him, love was not an excited state of feeling that expressed itself in raptures and ecstasies, and then died away. It was a principle of action as well as a sentiment of the heart; it was seen in deeds oftener than heard in words.

He desires that the same love may be in us—love that is shown in action, in obedience. He expresses this many times, in the chapter from which

our text is taken, and in that immediately following. If ye love me, he says, keep my commandments. If a man love me, he will keep my words. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings. If ye keep my commands, ye shall abide in my love, as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. This is the sentiment of all his preaching. Yet, while we claim to be his true disciples and friends, there are commandments which we do not keep.

To one of these I would now ask your attention. On the night in which our Lord was betrayed into the hands of the chief priests, at the close of the passover supper, eaten, as you well know, to commemorate the deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian oppression, he took of the bread and wine that always made a part of that supper, and first offering a prayer, partook of them with his disciples, enjoining it upon them to continue to do so in remembrance of him. In the words of Luke, he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, and said, this is my body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, this cup is the New Testament in my blood which is shed for you. In these words, and in similar language in Matthew and Mark, a commandment is laid upon us, of the same authority with every other in the New Testament, to observe a rite,

since called the Lord's Supper, as a memorial of our Saviour, of his life and death; in order to bring him and his services more forcibly to our thoughts, and to impress on our minds a deeper sense of our immense obligations, in consequence of his labours and sacrifices.

This is a commandment laid upon us with the same solemnity with every other of our religion. Nay, there is none that comes to us under circumstances of so much solemnity, if we consider the time, place, and occasion of its promulgation.

Yet this is one we do not keep. While we are even scrupulously exact in the keeping of others, this we feel at liberty to neglect. While we adopt the correct principle, that none can love the Lord Jesus but such as keep his sayings, there is one of his commandments we will not keep. Where is the consistency of this? Where our defence? Where do we find a privilege granted, to choose which of the commandments of our Lord we will obey, and which we will not? If love to Christ is the only proper test of a disciple, and if love is shown only in keeping his commandments, how, on our own principles, are we good Christians, while there is one of his commands we habitually neglect?

Let us attend to some of the probable reasons that deter so many of us from keeping this commandment of our Lord.

1. In the first place, there may exist floating objections to its authority and obligation.

If objections are entertained conscientiously, as the result of honest, laborious inquiry into the grounds on which this ordinance rests, they are entitled to respect, and nothing can be said; for, as the mind sees evidence, so it must believe. It cannot believe without proper evidence, nor contrary to it, after being once presented. He who acts according to his honest belief, whatever it may be, acts virtuously. If any refuse to keep this ordinance on ground such as this, blame can in no wise attach to them; man has no authority to censure; to their own Master they stand or fall.

But there are not, probably, many of those who disregard this commandment of our Lord, who do so from a sincere conviction that it is not a command of his, and not intended to be observed. For they have not inquired, they have not read, they have not convinced their minds one way or another; they merely think that it is not obligatory, without a single substantial reason, without one that really satisfies their own minds; they think that it wants sufficient authority, and, with no better assurance than this, neglect it through perhaps their whole lives. But it is not easy to understand how they can be thus confident. It is not easy to see how, without some careful study, and some show of reasoning at least, they can make up their minds in the way they do. For the plain repeated decla-

rations of scripture are before them. The ordinance is particularly described by three of the Evangelists, and is still more minutely laid down by Paul, as he received the account from our Lord himself, by express revelation: "I have received of the Lord," he says, "that which I delivered unto you." These accounts you perfectly recollect. Every thing in them is plain and strong. There is the manner of the ordinance clearly described; then is the command following, DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME. I do not see how a positive institution can be more plainly described, or its perpetuity more unequivocally enjoined. Neither am I able to perceive how any who have read these accounts over in the New Testament, *and have done nothing more than read them over,* can resist their force, or doubt for a moment the authority and obligation of the ordinance they describe; or, if they doubt where the language of Scripture is so clear and explicit, I do not see what they can consistently believe.

No one ought to give way to floating, undefined objections, in a thing of this nature. No one should consent to evade the plain language of scripture, and its most obvious meaning, without satisfying his mind, by careful study and other considerations of the greatest weight, that he is justified in so doing; and that some other sense than that which first presents itself is the more probable meaning of the writer. And as the greatest minds Chris-

tianity has ever known, those too that may be termed the coldest and most philosophical, most disposed by their general temperament to reject an ordinance like that of the Supper—appealing to the senses—and to view with peculiar favour the arguments that should oppose it, have not done so, but have received it, and observed it, as unhesitatingly as any of the moral precepts of our Lord; we may confidently believe, that there are no reasons on which its rejection can stand. At least, we should learn to suspect our own conduct and opinions, when we see others, so much more capable of forming a judgment in the case than ourselves, acting and thinking in a different manner. It is true, that one large and respectable sect of Christians reject it, together with baptism; but we may safely say that others cannot do so, on the strength of the arguments they use; they must be first educated in the general prejudices and feelings of the sect.

2. While few, comparatively, refuse to unite in an observance of the ordinance of which we speak, on the ground of objection to its authority and obligation, there are very many, who feel encouraged in rejecting it, by the countenance of the multitude.

They do not, probably, *justify* themselves by this plea; but they silence their inward reproaches by the reflection, that they are no worse than others, and do but as they do. But what shall we think of those, who in a matter of religious duty, instead

of being guided by the will and command of the Master they profess their own, explicitly declared, follow on in the track of the thoughtless and the worldly, govern themselves by the opinions of those who have no opinions, or whose opinions are the result of accident, or the dictate of fashion. Besides, if it is numbers they regard, and are willing to think in every case the majority to be right, let it be remembered, that at the first institution of Christianity, all partook of the Supper, and that for the first thousand years of the Christian Church, children even united in its observance. The rite was observed on every occasion of public worship, was considered as a regular part of it, and Christians joined in it as they did in the other parts of prayer and singing. This was the true apostolical practice, uncorrupted by superstitious additions. But when, from one step to another, Christians at length arrived at the truly appalling belief that the Saviour is really present, and united in one substance with the bread and wine, the common people shrunk with reverence and dread from so awful a rite; so that, in the Romish Church, the act of communicating came at length to be confined to the priest alone, the people standing by only as spectators. And at the present day, throughout all sects of Christians, it is the remains of superstitious fears of ages of ignorance, that operates on the minds of a great portion of the community, and withholds them

from the ordinance. But is it a worthy argument by which to be influenced, that we follow the example of the multitude, who take their opinions from education, accident, tradition? If, however, we still insist on making numbers our guide, should we not rather go back to the apostolic age, and the first centuries of the Christian Church, and govern ourselves by the practice of those primitive times, when all who called themselves Christians came to this ordinance? But let the Christian rescue himself from this unworthy slavery, this unmanly dependence on the conduct of others. Let him think and act for himself. Let him no longer take his ideas of this rite from prevailing notions, or the practice of those around him; but let him go to our Saviour himself, and learn from him its simple nature and purpose, its universal obligation; and let him go to the history of the early Church, and from the practice then prevailing, learn that it is as much the duty of a Christian to join in this ordinance, as it is to offer himself and his children for baptism.

3. There is, in the third place, the idea that the observance of the Lord's Supper will lay new and heavier obligations, and demand greater strictness of life, than before, that deters many from coming to the table.

Christians may think and believe this, but it will be without foundation. They can find no warrant for the opinion, either in the nature and design of

the institution itself, or in any thing related concerning it in the New Testament. And if they allow themselves to be influenced by it, so as to be kept away from it, they do wrong, and can furnish no authority in their defence. For how do we learn from the words of our Saviour, when instituting this rite, that any new obligations are imposed, or any austere and ascetic mode of life demanded of those who shall unite in its observance? All that can possibly be made of the nature and design of the Supper, from what is related in the New Testament, and we are to go no where else for our authority, is this; it is a rite instituted to serve as a memorial of our Lord; we eat bread and drink wine in imitation of him, and by that act to call him and his services more freshly to our minds; it is a feast of grateful, affecting remembrance, just as the passover was among the Jews. They met to commemorate their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt, to remember God their Saviour. We are commanded to meet, in remembrance of Jesus our Saviour from sin, to eat bread, a symbol of his body crucified for us, and drink wine, emblematical of his blood shed for us. It is a feast of affecting, happy remembrance, and nothing more. Who, then, cannot join in it? and what obligations are imposed that were not imposed before? We were redeemed before; we had received the same mercies before. How can our observance of it increase obligations already immeasurable, and

infinite? A creature of God, who has been made by him what he is, has been preserved by his care, fed, clothed, defended, redeemed by him, owes to God for such mercies every thing, the consecration of his whole nature, the service of his life; he owes his Redeemer and Saviour veneration, gratitude, love, and obedience. He has received the highest favours; the highest returns his nature is capable of are due; and his obligation to make them is not increased or lessened by his observing, or refusing to observe, any rite whatever; only, if he observes a rite plainly enjoined, it is a new instance of his obedience; if he refuses to observe it, it is a flagrant act of disobedience. It seems, therefore, to be sufficiently evident, that this ordinance cannot, in its own nature, impose any obligations that were not imposed before. If we consider it as demanding an exceeding strictness and rigour of virtue, a denial of all the sprightliness and gayety of life, a monastic seclusion from the world, or a greater degree of these acts of self-denial than before we had joined in its observance, we are mistaken, we have taken our notions from men, and not from the Gospel. If the religion of Jesus does not demand of us a holy and unspotted life before partaking of the Sacrament, it does not afterward; if it does not call on us to deny ourselves whatever is incompatible with a virtuous life before, it does not afterward. Things are not changed to the com-

municant. But you know, my brethren, the truth to be, that the Gospel always demands of you holiness, piety, the purest and the best; as much of you who are not communicants, as of you who are; and that if you do not give them, you are not worthy of your profession. You do not escape this heavy obligation, by refusing to keep this ordinance, neither do you add to it by keeping it. It is to be feared, that the idea that some almost unattainable graces will be expected in a communicant, keeps many away from the table, and encourages also many others in a more irreligious life than they would otherwise lead; as if Christianity demanded less of them, seeing they do not take on themselves the imagined additional obligations of the communicant. They need not be religious men, say they, till they join the church, and they will not join the church, because more religion is then required of them than they are capable of.

Much of the error that prevails on this subject has arisen, doubtless, from gross misapprehension of the meaning of Paul, in that place where he speaks of the supper. From the language he has used, strange inferences have been drawn, as to the obligations imposed on those who observe the ordinance, and of the danger of partaking unworthily. Christians have now, however, very generally learned, that the passage in question has no immediate application to any of the pre-

sent time; that its application is wholly local and particular. The Corinthians, whom he addressed, had fallen into the grossest habits of excess; had been guilty even of drunkenness and gluttony, while celebrating the Supper. They had entirely perverted its design, and came together for no other end than the indulgence of their appetites. It was for such gross misconduct that the apostle rebuked them in the sharp manner he did, and denounced against them such heavy judgments. But where, since that time, can we look for a similar abuse of this rite? Where, at the present day, for Christians who resemble, in the remotest degree, the Corinthians? Is not the demeanor of Christians, when assembled round the table, eminently serious and devout? How, then, can we imagine for a moment, the language of Paul, at the present day, applicable, except we see the same vices prevailing among Christians at the table which originally called it forth?

We may, certainly, however, eat and drink unworthily; our thoughts may wander; our devotion may slumber; our desires and affections may remain bound to the earth, when they should be lifted above; we may derive less good from the ordinance than we might have done by a more devout and collected mind, in the same manner as in the office of prayer we may be blame-worthy for engaging in it unworthily; but nothing more than this; and for this, an offence so much

less, we are not justified in heaping upon ourselves the heavy condemnation Paul denounces against the gross sins of the Corinthian converts—gluttony and drunkenness. And if we allow his language to have an influence, in deterring us from keeping this commandment of our Lord, we pervert it from its proper and intended application, to one of our own invention.

Though I have attempted to show, in what has been said, that we cannot discover, either from the nature of the institution of the Supper, or from any declarations of our Lord concerning it, that any new obligations are laid on the communicant, or any gloomy severity of life required of those who are inclined to join in its observance; yet, be it remembered, that all that severity of virtue, and the purity of life, are demanded, which become the Christian—a subject of redemption—a disciple of Jesus. Let it not be imagined, because it is maintained that no new obligation to a religious life is imposed by uniting in the observance of this rite, that, therefore, a religious life is not required. It is required; not more than of others—of every other Christian it is true—but as much. But the requirement is more likely to be met by him who observes this rite, because he makes use of an efficient means of holiness, which others neglect. For no one can long sit at the table of our Lord, and open his heart to all the influences of the occasion, without finding

his spirit wonderfully refreshed, and every good purpose exceedingly strengthened.

Neither let it be apprehended, lest the ordinance should receive an injury from stating thus plainly the whole truth respecting it, by drawing those to it who are unworthy. There can be no danger from this source. The communion is, in its nature, a pure and holy ordinance, at which none but those who are desirous of living lives of holiness will ever wish to be present. No other end can be answered by an attendance upon it, than the personal improvement of the individual. Who, then, but they who have that end in view, will attend upon it? And Heaven forbid that any such should be kept away, by erecting unscriptural standards of human perfection, by one of which Christians, who would approach the table, must be measured, and another of which they are expected afterward to reach. Rather let many approach who are unworthy, if a knowledge of the truth will lead to that result, than that nearly all should be kept away by a false and cruel system of spiritual domination. But none will approach who are unworthy. If there are not many Christians who will voluntarily engage in the act of prayer, except they are actuated by proper motives, neither need we fear that there will be many who will attend on the ordinance of the Supper, even on its most liberal footing, but such as are sincere, and sincerely desirous of reap-

ing every possible good from the institution.—We are weak, and erring, and sinful. We love virtue and goodness, in our hearts, we wish they were always seen in our lives, but we cannot gather strength to resist the infinite temptations of life. We need every assistance, every encouragement, to impart stability to our good purposes, and to reanimate our fainting minds. Do not, then, debar us this useful and interesting rite, so well calculated to help our infirmities, and lead us onward in the way of Christian excellence. Do not say, that the table of our Lord, who has given no rule of exclusion, shall be surrounded by a little knot of opinionists, vain and boastful of their own righteousness, while the humble Christian is alarmed, and sent disheartened away. No; let us rather desire to see every Christian, who comes to the public worship of God, with the proper feelings of a worshipper, come also, to the communion. Let us rather long for the time, when the first centuries of the Christian church shall come round again, and the distinction between church and congregation shall be done away; when this ordinance shall become a stated part of the Christian's public worship. Were it so, I believe it would add greatly to the religious character of the people at large, by connecting them, by a more visible and intimate bond of union, with Christ, their head.

4. I would mention superstitious ideas relating

to the solemnity of the rite, as another cause that operates to deter Christians from an observance of it.

Ideas and feelings of this nature are so universal, and have taken a hold so deep and strong, on the human mind, that it must be long before we can hope to see them supplanted, by truer and more rational impressions.

We must look for their origin in history. They have descended to us, doubtless, from those benighted ages of the Church, when the whole of religion was shrouded in darkness; its doctrines, few and simple as they are, converted to an unintelligible jargon; its ordinances, in their origin perfectly simple, represented as awful, and incomprehensible mysteries; that they might better subserve the designs of priestly ambition and ecclesiastical power. For in those ages when Christianity was emphatically a kingdom of this world, and the love of power was the ruling passion among the disciples of Christ, it was essential to the success of their projects, and to the stability of their ill gotten power, that the common people should be kept in the profoundest ignorance, and that all means of detecting the impositions practised upon them, should be taken from them. In consequence, whatever was plain and intelligible, was mystified; whatever was luminous, was veiled; whatever was cheerful and alluring, was shrouded with terrors; whatever would tend to inform and

enlighten the mind, was withheld. The Bible, that enemy of priestcraft, and friend of liberty and knowledge, was sealed up, and wrested from their hands. These tricks of the priesthood were abundantly successful; so that in no long time, priests as well as people, rulers as well as the ruled, were alike involved in one cloud of ignorance and superstition; the true nature of Christianity, and its true doctrines became lost, alike to the hierarchy and the deluded people, and gross darkness settled over the whole Christian world.

During this reign of ignorance, no part of Christianity underwent greater changes than the rite of the last Supper. The first departure from its original design, was when it came to be regarded as a mystery, like the mysteries of the heathen worship, when all who did not partake were excluded from witnessing its celebration. Another idea was soon introduced, that there is a real virtue, a divine virtue, in the bread and wine, after consecration by prayer. "A notion," says a distinguished writer,* "that opened a door to endless superstitions, and some of a very dangerous kind, as Christians were led to put these merely external rites in the place of moral virtue, which alone has the power of sanctifying the heart, and making men acceptable to God. After this, we are not surprised to find, early in the second century, that both baptism and the Lord's Supper were thought to be essential to salvation." From this time

* Priestley, in his Corruptions of Christianity.

there were, each century, new accessions of superstition; still more extravagant ideas of the sacredness and solemnity of the ordinance, and its awful and mysterious nature, were entertained; till, in the thirteenth century, the progress of corruption and superstition reached its farthest limit, in the doctrine of transubstantiation, which teaches, as you well know, that the bread and wine are changed into the real body and blood of Christ; "that in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist, there is really, and truly, and substantially, the body and blood, together with the divinity and soul, of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that there is a conversion made of the whole substance of the bread, into the body, and of the whole substance of the wine, into the blood, which conversion, the whole Catholic Church call transubstantiation." When the idea of the bread being really Christ, and therefore God, became current in the Church, and was established as true doctrine, by popes and councils, communicating became to the common people an act truly awful; the bread was received kneeling; and in no long time became the object of worship.

We thus see the gradual inroads of superstition in relation to this ordinance, and the true origin of all the groundless fears and fancies so generally entertained, even at this day. These fears and false impressions must be received from education, tradition, and from that resistless influence, that whatever is old, whether true or false,

and has been long received and venerated, exercises on the mind. They cannot have their source in scripture or truth; for there is nothing in any of the Evangelists, that can possibly give rise to a single fear. It would seem, indeed, to be impossible for any one to connect a single idea of terror, or of painful solemnity, with the accounts given of the institution by our Saviour. Neither is there any thing in the writings of Paul, that should overcast the mind with the least tinge of gloom. It is represented in the New Testament, as a familiar, social Supper, to promote love to Christ and one another, and to be observed in after ages, in remembrance of him, as a memorial of his love. Every other idea different from these, is of human origin, and has no authority in the Bible.

Do you then, Christian$, shrink from this ordinance from an undefined, and scarcely intelligible impression of fear and awe, you are culpable. You give away to a feeling, to your imagination, when you should go to the New Testament, and be governed by facts and the record. You know, as well as you know any thing, that the practice and doctrine of the Church have been grossly corrupt, replete with absurdity and folly—at a wide departure from the truth of the Gospel; and how can you justify yourself, in yielding to feelings these corruptions have created, and for which, you know that in the Gospel there is not the slightest foundation.

5. I would mention superstitious notions relative to the preparation necessary to a worthy partaking of the Supper, as a cause that probably deters some from uniting in it.

The origin of ideas of this kind, also, must be traced back to those times, when the ordinance, being regarded as a tremendous mystery, required, necessarily, much preparation of mind, to venture upon its observance; for there is nothing in the nature of the ordinance itself, to call for more careful preparation, than any other part of divine worship; nor do we find any where in the New Testament, directions to any extraordinary acts of this kind; and how is it possible there should be any uncommon preparation necessary? Can we not come together, and meditate on the character, life, and services of Jesus, and unite in the giving of thanks for what he did for us, without any extraordinary acts of previous preparation, or without having first reached the summit of human virtue? Are we not always prepared for such a duty; as much so, at least, as we are for the equally solemn duty of prayer? Is there any thing more awful and solemn in the one, than in the other? Is there any thing else beside the prayers that gives solemnity to the communion, and is not prayer the same in every place, and wherever offered up? I do not mean by this, and your candour, my friends, will not understand me to mean, that no preparation of the mind is desirable, that we may rush into the duty without seriousness or reflection. On the con-

trary, the Christian cannot be too deeply impressed, he cannot be too sober and devout, he cannot be too far separated from earthly care and feeling, he cannot be too well prepared, when he approaches the table of our Lord, if he would derive the greatest possible good from his attendance there. I only mean that no such preparation is necessary or required, as that special seasons must be set apart for the duty, before we may venture to sit at the table of our Lord. Self examination, and retirement, and prayer, are always good, and often necessary, but they are not better, or more necessary in relation to the communion, than any other religious service. Extravagant, and unreasonable, and unscriptural representations of the importance and necessity of these useful exercises, do essential injury to religion. If in the first centuries of the Church, all Christians, because they were Christians, partook of the Supper, in the same way that they united in the other acts of worship ; if the departure from that custom is a corruption of the simplicity and truth of the gospel, we may safely say, that for any to come to the communion, it is enough that they are seriously disposed, and desirous of using every means of becoming more so.

But the practice of most modern Churches, in this respect, is the very reverse of what it ought to be. Partaking of the communion seems to be considered by them the seal of perfection, the re-

ward of a full experience of religion, as it is called; an acknowledgment that he who presents himself is a Christian indeed, settled and established. Christians, therefore, are slow to present themselves; few being found bold enough to put themselves forward as patterns of every Christian virtue—they are unwilling to appear to arrogate to themselves such extraordinary merit. But how far this is from a just and scriptural practice, will appear at once, if we go to the Bible, and learn there what the institution is—a social meeting, for prayer and religious improvement; at which all the followers of their common Master were present, from which none were excluded by standards of Christian perfection, or Christian doctrine, but all met together on an equal footing, and joined in the services of the rite. In accordance with this, is it not plain, that we should regard it as one of the appointed means of Christian holiness, which is so clearly its original character; for which we are not to prepare, but which is to do something by its influence, to prepare us for Heaven. We, then, let it be remembered, come together around the table of our Lord, for the purposes of mutual edification and improvement, to meditate on the character and services of Jesus, to cherish good affections, to compare ourselves with the perfect pattern of the Saviour's example, to note our deficiencies, and stir ourselves up to greater efforts. We come together, not to show the world that we are better than others, but

that we wish to use every appointed means of becoming better than we now are. What preparation is requisite in the communicant, then, but virtuous desires, and the intention to derive from the ordinance every benefit it is its design to impart? No other preparation we believe to be necessary. We regard every one as a proper subject for communion, who is possessed of virtuous desires, and is desirous to make use of this additional means of virtue. We are sure that such a one, whoever, and whatever, he may be, will be benefited by his attendance; and then, the end of the institution is answered. Let those, therefore, who feel a single desire to join in this ordinance, not hesitate on the ground of qualification: that desire is a qualification, and the best one. Let them come, as they are at liberty to do, without questioning or ceremony.

6. Another reason, why many hold themselves back from this ordinance, is pride.

They are unwilling to confound themselves with those, with whom they should be compelled to associate. They do not like the idea of deriving their satisfaction from a source so common, and open to all. There is something unpleasant to them, in the sound of the words—member of a church. They do not like to be known by the world, as among religious people; they are unwilling to be seen engaged in the humble occupations and exercises, of professed Christians.

The feelings of men of this description, might be traced out much farther, but it cannot be necessary or useful—neither is the task a pleasant one.

7. Indecision, may be named as another reason, why many never unite in the observance of this ordinance.

They have a general purpose of doing it; they are religiously disposed, and exemplary in their lives, and wish, and intend, to conform to what they believe to be their duty in regard to it; but postpone the performance of it, from one time, to another, that shall be more convenient, and will find them better prepared; and in this way never make up their minds for the last time, when it shall be done. Let such Christians seriously represent to their minds, that it is not a matter of common interest, or worldly duty, or temporary concern, about which they suffer themselves to remain thus undecided, but an important Christian duty—an affair that touches their highest interests, and affects them in their dearest concernments—and they surely will not consent to continue in the questionable course they are in. If they doubt as to their fitness, and would, therefore, wait, they do themselves a wrong. The strong desire they feel, is a good warrant of their sufficient preparation.

This state of indecision, which I am inclined to believe exists in many, would be avoided, and

much unhappiness saved, if there were any fixed period for first coming to the table of the communion. It is the beginning, and when to begin, that, without any serious obstacle, debars many all their lives long from this rite. This evil can only be overcome, it would seem, by removing the period for joining this ordinance, back to the earlier years of youth. Let it be considered as much a duty, and as weighty a one, by parents, at a proper age, to explain to their children this ordinance, and bring them to it, as they do, to bring them to the font for baptism, and the difficulty would be at once removed, and the rite would be no longer a deserted one. The young would then grow up in the good habit of attending upon it, as they are now in the habit of frequenting public worship; and who can foresee the excellent effects that would follow, both to the young themselves at large, and to the influence and power of religion.

If it be said, the rite is beyond the capacity of the young; they could not understand it, or be profited by it. It is true, they could not understand it, or be profited by it, as it has been generally explained, and administered by most of the churches of Christendom. They could not understand the doctrine of the real presence, nor any other of the multitude of mysteries and follies, with which it is almost every where encumbered. But, their objections do not lie at all against it, as it stands recorded in the New Testament, and as we receive

and believe it. Thus understood, it requires no greater capacity, nor more maturity of mind, than the usual services of public worship. Cannot the young comprehend this—that Jesus, the author of their religion, the night on which he was betrayed, took bread and wine, and partaking of them with his disciples, commanded them, after he should be dead, and separated from them, to meet together often in the same manner, and eat bread, and drink wine, in remembrance of him; the broken bread, to remind them of his body crucified for them, and the wine, of his blood poured out for them? Cannot they understand, that as persons have visited the tombs of departed parents, or of good and great men, to bring them again to their memory, and be excited to an imitation of their virtues, so, they attend on the ordinance of the Supper, that when they see the bread and wine representing the body and blood of Jesus, his death, they may be reminded of his goodness to them, and be excited to an imitation of him? May not the subject be variously illustrated, and made perfectly plain to the youthful mind?

8. As another probable reason that deters many from partaking of the Lord's Supper, may be mentioned, the prejudice that exists against it, as a means of spiritual power, and of building up a sect.

And it cannot be denied, that there are grounds for the prejudice. Do we not hear of efforts

made in various religious communities, where it seems to be the grand aim of those concerned, to draw the largest possible number into the church; and where they estimate the progress of religion by the number of those who, in an excited and unnatural state of feeling, are impelled to the communion, from which, when the excitement is over, they in too many instances retire? Is not the number of those, who have been admitted to the Supper, made a theme of something like boasting, and held up as evidence of personal, ministerial success? But, more than all, is it not true, to the shame of the age, and to the reproach of Christians, that a church is in but too many instances, little more than a conclave of Cardinals, with a Pope at their head, and whose vocation seems to be rather to take cognisance of heresy, and deal with heretics, than the improvement of their own hearts and lives, and the cultivation of kind affections?

Yet, if these things are, in any degree true, of churches and ministers, can we wonder that the communion is a deserted ordinance—that men who understand what Christianity is, and what its ministers ought to be, should decline connecting themselves with an institution, bearing so little resemblance to what it originally was, and so injurious to the best interests of religion?

But be assured, my brethren, the subject is presented to your consideration, at this time, not for

the glory of increasing the church—for I wish the church and congregation to be one; the congregation to be the church, and the church to be the congregation, and without spiritual power of any kind—but, because it is in itself most important, and nearly concerning your duty. To eat bread, and drink wine, in remembrance of our Lord, is one of his most emphatic commands; to comply therefore, is a most urgent duty. And I press it upon you, both that you may be stirred up to the discharge of a plain duty, and that you may be persuaded to the use of a means of improvement, that will be most serviceable to your virtues.

9. The ninth, and last reason I shall notice, is inattention to the subject,—and unconcern about it.

It is to be feared, that very many of those who never observe the ordinance of which we are speaking, are influenced in their neglect by feelings of indifference. If there are so many among professed Christians, who are so thoughtless as we know them to be, about the whole concern and duty of religion, both as it relates to this life, and the eternity to be revealed, we may well suppose it to be indifference, or a fatal inattention to the subject, that accounts for the great number of Christians who never will consent to sit at the communion. But what can we think, and what can we say, of the moral feelings of those who remain unconcerned and indifferent in regard to a

command so earnest, and delivered at a time, and in a manner so affecting, as that which enjoins an observance of the Eucharist? It is a state of mind that, indeed, admits no apology, no extenuation. Jesus Christ was willing to sacrifice, not only his peace and comfort, but even his life, for us, and our salvation; he obeyed the Divine Will even unto death for our sakes. But the indifferent man cannot take the trouble so much as to ponder or weigh the arguments in behalf of a solemn command of Jesus, requiring of him only a little of his time, and a share in his affections. May it be true of every one of us, that we are clear of this foulest stain on the Christian character.

Other reasons, beside these I have named, might be enumerated, as having an influence to deter Christians from coming to the communion. But I believe those I have considered will be found to be of the most importance.

I would only ask, in conclusion, brethren, that you would make the subject on which I have been speaking, a matter of serious reflection. I do not think you doubt even, as to the authority, and obligation of the ordinance. You believe it to be a part of Christianity, as well as baptism. Is it not then prudent—incumbent on you—a duty—to examine, and see why it is you refuse to observe it?

Remember, the true friends of our Lord, are they who keep his commandments. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is——saith the Saviour, that loveth me.

NOTES.

NOTE to Page 7.

"*Its perpetuity more unequivocally enjoined.*"

The Apostle Paul plainly intimates, says Mr. Belsham, that this commemorative rite is to be frequently repeated, and to be continued in the church to the end of time. In this way the visibility and unity of the Christian church are preserved from age to age. They who attend upon this institution, do thereby, publicly declare, that there is a body of men in the world, who agree in acknowledging Jesus as their Master, and who glory in their subjection to his authority. And the universality and perpetuity of this ordinance, show, that all who join in it, in all places, and in all ages, belong to the same body, and have one common head. And this consideration may well reconcile sincere Christians of various parties, and denominations to each other, while they recollect the great importance of those points in which they agree, in comparison with those, whether of doctrine or practice, in which they differ.

May it not, also, be observed, that they who neglect this institution, neglect the only positive rite which was appointed by the great Founder of the Christian faith, for publicly distinguishing the professors of his religion from the mass of the unbelieving world; the ordinance of baptism being of a more private nature, and having respect to families rather than churches. This neglect of the Lord's Supper, in proportion as it prevails, deprives Christianity of its visible form, and prevents it from being an object of attention to the world; whereby its progress is obstructed, and Christians lose the great advantage, which they might otherwise derive from social intercourse, for mutual encouragement, and for the increase of mutual affection. In the primitive church, it is well known, that all who were baptized were admitted to communion, infants themselves not excepted. But in process of time, as the purity of the Christian faith became corrupted by human tradition, and as the simplicity of Christian institutions was lost amidst the unintelligible mysteries, and pompous ceremonies in which they were involved, the multitude were in-

timidated from attending upon this simple, cheerful, social rite; and the benefit of it was in a great measure lost; nor will it be perfectly recovered, till Christianity is restored to its primitive simplicity, and the practice of this rite becomes, as it originally was, universal among its professors.—*Notes on the Epistles.*

NOTE to Page 9.

"*And that, for the first thousand years of the Christian Church.*"

Wall says, in his history of infant baptism, that the Roman church, about the year 1000, entertaining the doctrine of transubstantiation, let fall the custom of giving the holy elements to infants, and the other western churches, mostly following their example, did the like upon the said account; but, that the Greeks, not having the said doctrine, continued, and do still continue, the custom of communicating infants.—*Wall's Hist. of Inf. Bapt.* vol. II. p. 377.

See an excellent Sermon of the late T. Kenrick, of Exeter, England, on the subject of bringing children to the communion.

NOTE to Page 20.

"*Reached its farthest limit in the doctrine of transubstantiation.*"

The examination of Lord Cobham, well known as one of the early English reformers, as given in Gilpin's life of that nobleman, will show the opinion of the church at that time in relation to the Lord's Supper. He was cited to answer for heresy, before Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, and the assembled clergy. After some questions had been asked relating to other points of doctrine, the Archbishop turned to him, and inquired what he thought in regard to the Holy Sacrament.

"With regard to the Holy Sacrament," answered Lord Cobham, "my faith is, that Christ, sitting with his disciples, the night before he suffered, took bread; and blessing it, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, take, eat, this is my body which was given for you. Do this in remembrance of me. This is my faith, sir, with regard to the Holy Sacrament. I am taught this faith by Matthew, Mark, Luke and Paul." The Archbishop then asked him, "whether after the words of consecration he believed there remained any material bread." "The scriptures," said he, "make no mention of the word material.

I believe, as was expressed in the paper I gave in, that, after consecration, Christ's body remains in the *form* of bread." Upon this a loud murmur arose in the assembly; and the words heresy, heresy, were heard from every part. One of the Bishops especially crying out with more than ordinary vehemence, "That it was a foul heresy to call it bread," Lord Cobham, who stood near, interrupting, said, "St. Paul the apostle was as wise a man as you are, and perhaps as good a Christian; and yet he, after the words of consecration, plainly calls it bread. The bread, saith he, that we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" "St. Paul," he was answered, "must be otherwise understood; for it was surely heresy to say so." Lord Cobham asked, "how that appeared?"—"Why" said the other, "it is against the determination of Holy Church." "You know, sir," interrupted the Archbishop, "we sent you the true faith on that point clearly determined by the church and holy doctors." "I know none holier," replied Lord Cobham, "than Christ and his apostles; and this determination is none of theirs, it is plainly against scripture." "Do you not then believe in the determination of the church?" "I do not. I believe in the scriptures; and in all that is founded upon them: but in your idle determinations I have no belief. To be short with you, I cannot consider the church of Rome as any part of the Christian church. Its endeavour is to oppose the purity of the gospel, and to set up in its room, I know not what absurd constitutions of its own." This free declaration threw the whole assembly into great disorder. Every one exclaimed against the audacious heretic. Among others, a prior of the Carmelites, lifting up his eyes to heaven, cried out, "what desperate wretches are these scholars of Wickliffe."

The true faith as to the Communion, which the Archbishop sent to Lord Cobham, is thus: "The faith and determination of the Holy Church, touching the blissful Sacrament of the Altar, is this, that after the sacramental words be once spoken, the material bread, that was before bread, is turned into Christ's very body; and the material wine, that was before wine, is turned into Christ's very blood. And so there remaineth from thenceforth no material bread, nor material wine, which were there before the sacramental words were spoken."

NOTE to Page 22.

"*Nor do we find directions to any extraordinary acts of this kind.*"

This may be thought to be opposed by Paul's direction to examine ourselves. But the examination enjoined by Paul, according to all

the best interpreters of scripture, does not relate to our general character, our faith, sins, &c.; but simply to the point—whether in our celebration of the ordinance we conform to the institution as he has described it. On this subject it may be of use to see the opinions of a learned commentator. Mr. Locke says, "that to remedy the disorders of the Corinthians, the Apostle sets before them Christ's own institution of this Sacrament; that in it, they might see the manner and end of its institution; and by that, every one might examine his own comportment herein, whether it were conformable to that institution, and suited to that end. In the account he gives of Christ's institution, we may observe, that he particularly remarks to them, that this eating and drinking was no part of commmon eating and drinking, for hunger and thirst; but was instituted in a very solemn manner, after they had supped, and for another end, viz. to represent Christ's body and blood, and to be eaten and drank in remembrance of him, or, as St. Paul expounds it, to show forth his death. Another thing which they might observe in the institution was, that it was done by all who were present united together in one company at the same time; all which put together, shows us what the examination here proposed is. For the design of the Apostle here being to reform, what he found fault with in their celebrating the Lord's Supper, it is by that alone we must understand the directions he gives about it, if we will suppose he talked pertinently. And if the account of Christ's institution be not for their examining their carriage by it, and adjusting it to it, to what purpose is it here. *The examination therefore proposed, was no other but an examination of their eating the Lord's Supper by Christ's institution, to see how their behaviour herein comported with the institution, and the end for which it was instituted.* Which farther appears to be so, by the punishment annexed to their miscarriages herein, which was infirmities, sickness, temporal death, with which God chastened them. For if the unworthiness here spoken of were either unbelief, or any of those sins which are usually made the matter of examination, it is to be presumed the Apostle would not wholly have passed them over in silence: This at least is certain, that the punishment of these sins, is infinitely greater than that which God here inflicts on unworthy receivers, whether they who are guilty of them received the Sacrament or no.

A

SERMON,

PREACHED

AT THE DEDICATION

OF

The Second Congregational Church

IN NORTHAMPTON,

DEC. 7, 1825.

BY HENRY WARE, JR.

MINISTER OF THE SECOND CHURCH IN BOSTON.

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SERMON.

EZRA v, 3.

WHO HATH COMMANDED YOU TO BUILD THIS HOUSE?

When Ezra with his countrymen returned from the captivity in Babylon and commenced the rebuilding of the Temple, the inhabitants of the land looked on with jealous and unfriendly eyes, and sought by every means in their power to defeat the design. Once the work was stopped; and they exulted in the expectation that the project was at an end. But through the protecting favor of Providence the enterprize was renewed, and 'the prophets of God helped it.' Their enemies renewed their opposition, and again attempted to frustrate the pious undertaking; and, as if they had a right to interfere, came to them with the question, 'Who hath commanded you to build this House?' The builders, in the integrity of their hearts and unwavering reliance on heaven, answered them—'We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth;' and distinctly stated the reasons and authority of their procedure; to the truth and justice of which their most obstinate opponents were compelled at last to submit.

The same question may with propriety be put to all who in like manner are engaged in rearing a Temple for the worship of God, and they should be ready to answer it with

equal distinctness and decision. It will sometimes come from those who have watched them with the same unfriendly eyes that were cast upon Ezra and his companions, and who would equally rejoice to thwart their undertaking. It will sometimes come from friends, who are anxious to know, and in the spirit of love have a right to inquire, upon what principles their brethren are proceeding. It ought to be put by themselves to their own minds, in order that they may be properly satisfied with the authority on which they have rested, the motives which have influenced them, and the purposes which they have designed to promote.

When you come up therefore to-day, Christian Brethren, to present to God the House which you have built for him, I ask you to meet this question with honest and serious consideration ;—no matter whence it comes—be it from those who disapprove and would hinder, or from those who wish you well ; let it come, at any rate, from your own consciences, and with the first act of your worship here let it receive a careful reflection and honest reply.

Who hath commanded you to build this House? If I may be permitted to interpret your reply, I doubt not you are ready to answer, with the steady unhesitating confidence of the builders at Jerusalem—'*We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth,*' *and we have done this at His command.* For you have followed what appeared to you the will of God as conveyed to your minds by the intimations of his Providence, and the circumstances in which you were thrown. God does not point out to us our duty by an audible voice, nor through a messenger specially commissioned. He leaves it for us to interpret his will from the posture of things around us, and from the condition in which we stand ; and this interpretation, faithfully made, is, to the religious mind, as clear an indication of the divine command, as if it were written by a sunbeam on the heavens. The circumstances in which you found yourselves were not of your own

making, nor of your own seeking. You did not rashly and tumultuously rush to division and hurry on to schism; but you waited to consider, you perused deliberately the current of events, you carefully paused to assure yourselves that you construed them aright, and you severed the ancient tie, which you longed to maintain, only when you found that fidelity to conscience and the interests of truth peremptorily demanded it. The voice of conscience is the voice of the Deity. The call of duty is the call of God.

Your duty to yourselves commanded you to build this house. You are bound, in the liberty which the gospel has proclaimed, to acknowledge no human master in religious things, to read and interpret the scriptures for yourselves, to worship God according to your own convictions of his nature and requirements, and to favor that administration of his word and ordinances which you shall find to be most instructive and edifying.—Your duty to your families urged you; for the children whom God has given you in charge, it is required that you rear in early attachment to the principles and institutions of the religion you love, and ensure to them a free admission to their rights and privileges as believers.—The cause of pure Christianity and liberal principles required it of you; for these—'every where spoken against,' though believed by you to be 'the wisdom of God and the power of God'—demand the countenance and favor of their friends, and are to spread through their labors and sacrifices.—The cause of consistent protestantism and the great principles of the Reformation required it; for they demand the multiplication of institutions which shall maintain the equal rights of disciples, and frown upon all assumption of spiritual dominion, and reject all interposition of human creeds and forms between the word of God and the consciences of men.—Your desire to do the most which you might be able to do to extend the influence of Christianity, to discountenance error and sin, to promote the welfare of

society and enhance the happiness of men, required it. For these are all promoted by the worship and doctrine of God's house; and whoever builds a Christian temple, lights a lamp which spreads new lustre and gladness upon earth, and shows the path of life to men. Finally, a strong sense of the worth and influence of religious institutions to yourselves and to the community, which have been the pride and safety of New England, which are the strength and hope of public order and virtue, which are the counsel and solace of the individual spirit—has operated powerfully to prompt your efforts, and give you perseverance to accomplish them.

Influenced by these various motives—which, to him who feels them, have all the authority of a divine command—you have erected this house. Being now assembled to set it apart to the purposes for which it is designed, it may not be unprofitable to turn your attention for a few moments to the consideration of those purposes. The topic is suitable to the day, and cannot but accord with the feelings with which you open the doors of this sanctuary.

The Purposes of the House of God are two: Worship, and Instruction; the divine honor, and human improvement. Let us speak of them in order.

First. The first purpose is Worship. The Temple is for the Divine honor. There God is said 'to record his name.' There his commands are promulgated. There his court is held. There his subjects meet their King, his children kneel around their Father. There, He who is over all is acknowledged and reverenced by the creatures he has made; He who is good to all receives the homage and thanksgiving of the children he has blest. There, uniting in the most reasonable and becoming act of rational beings, they bow down before Infinite Majesty, they swell the chorus of praise to Infinite Love, they lift the voice of gratitude for daily favors, and cast themselves down as humble suppliants of divine mercy.

That this worship may be acceptable, the Christian considers it necessary that it be *intelligent* and *fervent*.

I. In order that it may be *intelligent*, he must understand the true Object of worship, the mode in which it should be offered, and the reasons on which it is founded.

1. Intelligent worship comprehends, first, a right apprehension of the Object of worship. The Christian does not worship, like the Samaritans, 'he knows not what;' nor is his altar, like that of the Athenians, to an 'unknown God.' Nor, like a majority of the nations in all ages, does he adore the host of heaven, and offer 'incense to the moon walking in her brightness.' He does not find a god in the winds, and another in the waters, nor supplicate a divinity on every high place and under every green tree, nor bow down before the beasts of the field and the reptiles of the dust, and the work of his own hand, and the images of his own fancy. When man was guided by his own uninstructed reason, he did these irrational things. But since the message of God by Jesus Christ has enlightened him, he engages in a more reasonable service. He looks abroad with a more discerning eye upon nature, and asks her testimony concerning God. Nature proclaims to him in all her works that God is one:

> ONE sovereign Power o'er moving worlds presides;
> ONE voice created, and ONE wisdom guides.

The order and arrangement of the universe, infinite in its variety, yet adjusted with infinite harmony; the manifest uniformity of design, and the perpetual analogy of the several departments; the skilful adaptation of all parts to all other parts, and the combination of all to promote similar and common results; convince him that the wisdom is one which devised, and the hand one which performed. Every plant that grows upon the earth, every wave that breaks upon the shore, every star that sparkles in the firmament,

speak of one and the same author. It testifies that there is no rival majesty, no divided skill; that 'this is the Lord, and besides Him there is no God.'

He opens the Records of the divine dispensations in the volume of scripture, and asks *their* testimony concerning the Object of worship. Here also he learns that God is one. The testimony is full and perfect. From the creation of the world to the revelation on the Isle of Patmos; through every change of dispensation, in every variety of annunciation, in the worship of the patriarchs, the predictions of the prophets, the preaching of the apostles, there is one concurrent unanimous testimony to the unity of God. To establish the knowledge and authority of one Supreme divinity, in opposition to the claims of all false gods and imaginary divinities, was the very purpose for which Abraham was called from his idolatrous kinsmen, and his descendants separated from the nations of the earth. To perpetuate this great truth was the object of that wonderful series of miracles by which that people was planted in the promised land, and of that peculiar providence which accompanied, guided, blest, and punished them. The way was thus prepared for the kingdom of Jesus Christ, who should extend to all nations this holy doctrine, and establish through the world those principles of righteousness and peace, which can rest on no other foundation, and gain authority from no other source.

We understand then, that the Object of Christian worship is but one. And this, not in any modified sense, but strictly and absolutely, without reserve, equivocation, or mystery. We understand in their simplest and most obvious sense the words of Moses—'The Lord our God is one Lord.' We perceive no evidence that he or his people, at any period of their history, supposed that Jehovah was in any sense more than one. We understand our Saviour also to intend, what his language most manifestly asserts, when addressing his

Father in prayer, he said, 'This is life eternal, that they might know THEE, THE ONLY TRUE GOD, and Jesus Christ whom Thou has sent.' We understand in its plain and obvious sense the declaration of Paul—'Though there be that are called Gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there be gods many and lords many) yet to us there is but ONE GOD, THE FATHER, of whom are all things and we in him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things and we by him.' We profess ourselves to feel authorized by this express language to worship the Father as the only God. We do not perceive how such expressions are consistent with the notion that any other being or person is to be associated with Him in divine honors.

This is corroborated by all the examples of the New Testament. When it is inquired, who is the true object of worship, the answer must be, he who was adored as such in the history of the New Testament. But in that volume there is no example of worship except to God the Father. We read, it is true, concerning many, that they fell down at the feet of Jesus, and worshipped him. But it was not as God. Cornelius, in precisely the same manner, worshipped Peter, but without intending to adore him as God. It was that act of reverence and homage which was paid to eminent persons, and was constantly given him by strangers and others who regarded him only as a distinguished Rabbi, or perhaps a prophet. When the Magi came from the East 'to worship the king of the Jews,' they did not mean to acknowledge him as God, but to present to him the customary honors of a prince—as Calvin has very distinctly shown.* When our Lord tells his disciples that by taking the lower seats at an entertainment they shall be invited higher, and so have worship of the guests; we do not understand him

*See Calvin's annotation on Matthew ii, 2.

to mean divine honors.* When we read in the New Testament—'The people worshipped the Lord and the king,'† we do not thence infer that Solomon was regarded by them as a divine being, or that the worship to him was the same supreme homage which was presented to God. Neither from the use of the word in relation to Jesus Christ are we to infer that he was regarded as God; since there is no fact more incontrovertible than this, that the word *worship* signifies that tribute of respectful obeisance which was customarily paid to superiors and kings.

The examples of the New Testament, therefore, direct us to worship the Father. Jesus himself, the great high priest of our profession, has set us the example. In all his devotions he addressed the Father as the sole object of them. He gave no example of prayer to the Holy Spirit. He promised to send the Spirit after his departure, and directed his disciples to pray to the Father that he might impart it to them; but never directed them to address the Holy Spirit in prayer. He did not even direct them to regard himself as an object of worship, but expressly forbad them after his resurrection to ask any thing of him, but to ask the Father in his name. Stephen, indeed, being about to die, commended his soul to Jesus, saying, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' But this was no act of divine worship, or of prayer; as is evident from the situation of the holy martyr. At that moment of extreme trial, it pleased God to sustain him by causing him to see 'the heavens opened, and the Son of man'—how? Sitting as God to be worshipped? No; but 'standing at the right hand of God;' and, with the earnest affection and faith of a disciple, he cried

* In this example it is to be observed, that the original word is different from that used in the other cases. It is however to my purpose, as proving the sense which our translators affixed to the word in question. Luke xiv, 10.

† 1 Chron. xxix, 20.

out—as any humble believer would do who should be blessed with the same privilege of a personal vision of the Lord—'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.'*

We look further; and we find the very remarkable fact, that of all the doxologies or ascriptions of praise to God, which are contained in the books of the New Testament, there is not one which implies that their object is in any sense more than one. This, I say, is a very striking fact. The favorite doxologies in many churches, and the only doxologies in some, are ascriptions to God in three persons. But there is not one such in the New Testament. An ascription of honor is sometimes made to the Saviour; and who could refuse to join in it? But never to him under the title of God, and never in connexion with the Holy Spirit. So that the doxologies of Unitarians are expressed in the identical words of scripture, words 'which the holy ghost teaches;' while every Trinitarian doxology is contained in words of man's devising. And we are entirely unable to persuade ourselves that we ought to forsake the language of holy writ, and adopt in preference that of fallible men. We cannot understand why the apostles should not have somewhere left us an example, if this were in any measure essential to true christian worship.

We know that there are others who think differently; and they doubtless have reasons for their opinions which satisfy their own minds. It is not for us to judge our brethren. To our minds, the voice of God's works and word unequivocally declare, that the Father alone is to be worshipped, and we ascribe to him glory in the language which his holy servants have recorded in the scriptures. If we should unite with him two other objects of adoration, we should find

*The reader will observe, on turning to this passage in Acts vii, 59, that the word *God* is printed *in italics*—to intimate that there is no such word in the original Greek. Its needless insertion by our translators has doubtless led many into error.

ourselves compelled to use language which the scriptures do not contain. Our hearts condemn us not in this, and therefore we have confidence toward God, and we trust that we may be permitted, without rebuke or offence, to follow our persuasion in devoting this Temple to 'the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,' as the one Living and True God; and thus help to perfect that day when 'the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth—for the Father seeketh such to worship him.'

But it is not enough to know who is the Object of our worship; in order to render it intelligent we must understand his character.

To learn the character of God we again go abroad among his works, and they testify of him. 'The invisible things of God, even his eternal power and divinity, are clearly seen from the creation of the world, being understood by the things which are made.' The heavens declare his glory, the earth is full of his riches, and the ways of his providence show the excellence of his wisdom and the greatness of his love. But it is the revelation of his word which most fully unveils his attributes, and discloses the principles of his government. There we obtain knowledge of that Holiness, which is the essence of his nature and the law of his kingdom. There it is that we find him the worthy object of confidence and affection; not a harsh sovereign, not an arbitrary and capricious king,—ruling for his own glory, independently of the happiness of his creatures; but whose glory consists in his paternal character, and is exalted by the diffusion of happiness. We there learn that in his character there is nothing partial, nothing imperfect, nothing inconsistent; that his attributes are all infinite and all harmonious; that there is no contradiction or contest between them; that divine Holiness does not interfere with divine Benevolence, nor infinite Justice need to be reconciled to infinite Mercy. But that all are at peace, essentially and

eternally ; that all are one,—guided by one law of perfect rectitude, and cooperating to one end, the holiness and happiness of the universe. In a word, that his name is Love, and his government Grace. In what delightful words was this announced, when he proclaimed his glory to the Lawgiver of Israel—' The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty.' In what gracious letters has the Evangelist written it, where he records—' God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' What a magnificent monument to it is the Christian church—which upholds among men the life giving doctrines, the sanctifying truths, and the precious promises which came from heaven !

Such is a slight glance at the character of the Being whom as Christians we worship. We would that we were more deeply impressed with a sense of his perfections ! We would that we felt more as we should feel, the glory of his illustrious attributes, and that we dwelt upon them with more fervent devotion and love ! But, deficient as we may be, we yet do feel and profess for them such entire reverence and faith, that we are unable to receive any doctrines as true which are in any measure inconsistent with them. We have so received the instructions of Jesus, that we are jealous—we trust with a godly jealousy—of all views of the divine administration which go to contravene his holiness, equity, truth or benevolence ; or which in any degree oppose a persuasion of the rectitude of his purposes—all ordained in righteousness and all working for good. It seems to us a contradiction in terms, that perfect Holiness should suffer the whole human family to come into being inveterately adverse to holiness, and that infinite Justice should inflict eternal sufferings on account of a sinful nature, with-

out the sufferer's fault. It seems to us impossible that infinite Goodness should establish the unequal system of election to eternal life, and that infinite Rectitude should continue to inflict on any one that punishment, which has already been borne by a substitute. Such opinions appear to us irreconcilable with the perfections of God. And therefore, in rearing this house to God's glory, we must be permitted to say plainly, that we do not regard these things as constituting part of his glory. We find authority for them neither in nature, providence or scripture. We worship Him, who formed all men equal and guiltless, and has assigned to all an impartial trial. We worship him as sinners, —not by birth, but by practice only ; as a God of grace,— not for the elect only, but for all, not purchased by compensation to unwilling justice, but offered freely by a Father's love ; as a God of holiness, who abhors sin, and will punish unrepenting transgression ; but as also a God of mercy, who delights to forgive, who punishes none but the obstinately guilty, and only for their own sins. If it seem an evil thing to any that we thus judge of the divine government, we can only say, our hearts condemn us not. We judge of it only for ourselves. If others find satisfaction and peace in different views, let them enjoy them. We are unable to do so. Our trust and consolation rest in the views we have stated. We think we see in them a brighter glory. We pray that we may yet more fully discern and appreciate it; and that we may never cease to contemplate, with increasing devotion, the amiableness of that excellence which beams from his works, his providence, and his word, in rays of unutterable and inextinguishable Love.

2. In the next place, intelligent worship requires that the Christian understand *the mode in which it should be offered.*

If he were in the uninstructed state of nature, he should come immediately to his Creator, and present his offering in such way as might seem to him best. The mountain

might be his altar, and the stars his priests, and his praises might go up on the winds with the incense of the flowers and the songs of the birds. But being, as he is, the Child of Revelation, the way of access is opened to him through a Mediator. He has been taught, that Jesus is 'the way, the truth, and the life; that no one comes to the Father but by him.' He therefore quits all trust in the ways that his own reason might have devised, and approaches the mercy seat under guidance of the Saviour.

Christian worship is worship through Jesus Christ—after his example, by his authority, according to his instruction, through his invitation and encouragement, in his name, by faith in him, as his disciples. If we had learned the character of the Supreme Being, and our relation and duty to him, by our own study; then we might have reared these walls and come to this altar in our own name and strength. But as it is, we are led up hither by Jesus Christ. His instructions are our light, his name is our passport. Our knowledge of God, our ground of hope, our assurance of pardon, we have derived from his revelation. And we should be ungrateful to our chief benefactor, we should cast contempt on Him who sent him, except this foundation were laid in his name, and his mediation acknowledged in the offerings at this altar.

3. Once more; if we would have our worship intelligent, we must understand *the reasons on which it is founded.* We must know that it is not to be a servile offering, the tribute of fear, the adulation of slaves; but the generous, affectionate, confiding ministration of children; the object of which is not to add to the lustre of the divine glory, or promote the majesty and happiness of the Deity. These are irrational and presumptuous imaginations, which might be allowable at the shrine of Jupiter, or the temple of Juggernaut, but have no place in the hearts of children at the footstool of infinite love. No—'God is not worshipped by

men's hands as needing any thing of them, for He himself gives to all life and breath and all things.' It is the benefit and improvement of man which are designed. God condescends to receive the imperfect tribute of his offspring, because it is necessary for them, for their happiness and virtue, that they should commune with him; that they should feel his presence, express their obligations, confess their infirmities and sins, and supplicate for pardon and help. He might reign in eternal and unchanging glory without them; but where would be their hope or peace without Him? His throne would stand, his empire be unaffected, his felicity undiminished, though man were forever silent, and earth and nature contained no worshipper. But man—insufficient of himself, helpless and hopeless when alone,—attains his best knowledge and his highest perfection and happiness only in acquaintance and intercourse with God. It is that he may attain this felicity and perfection, that God has appointed and requires the worship of his creatures. It exalts them. It elevates them to a resemblance of the infinitely Holy and Good. It prepares them, as nothing else could do, for that spiritual life and bliss which eternal Love would communicate to the souls of men.

This brings us to the next topic which was proposed;

II. That the worship of God's House must be *fervent*.

It is possible that it might be intelligent, as has been described, and yet want that spiritual fervor which should render it most acceptable to God and most beneficial to the soul. We must be 'fervent in spirit' when we serve the Lord. The heart must be engaged as well as the understanding, and the affections interested while the mind consents. The Christian, whose first principle it is to '*love* the Lord with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength,' must *worship* him with all the heart, soul, mind and strength. Not think it enough to speak praise with his lips, and bend the knee in adoration; to assent to his authority, to be con-

vinced of his excellence, to own his perfections; but must seek to feel them, to regard them with delight, to praise them with emotion. If there be any thing in which we are likely, in this state of frailty and imperfection, to fall short of the duty and happiness of our religious nature, it is in this. We do not need to be taught the perfections which reside in God, or to learn what service our relation to him demands. But we do need—thronged as we are by earthly objects and engagements—to cultivate a more spiritual apprehension of them, to realize more feelingly their existence and power, and to live in a more habitual contemplation of them. They are the most glorious and delightful objects presented to the human soul; and he who is enabled most successfully to rise beyond the solicitations of present things, and be most frequently absorbed in that meditation and worship which the Saviour emphatically calls the 'worship in spirit and in truth'—that man has attained the highest eminence of human happiness on earth. We are too satisfied to know little of this fervor. None of us, while in the flesh, may be able to maintain it at all times, and some of our constitutions may be so earthly and sluggish, that we may at no time be able to reach it. But every approach to it is to be coveted as an approach toward perfection, and every season of it to be welcomed as a return of enjoyment. It is that spiritualmindedness which is life and peace. It is a foretaste of Heaven. Brethren, may you experience much of it within these walls. May this sacred place witness and make perfect your growth in the best spirit of devotion.

We have thus remarked upon the purpose of God's house as consecrated to his worship. Let us now consider its second object—as designed for THE INSTRUCTION OF MAN.

In the temple at Jerusalem, the people assembled to wait upon God, but did not receive there any regular communications respecting duty. In the temples of the heathen world, the worshippers are concerned only to perform their

rites, but learn no lessons of duty or morality. But in the Christian temple, God speaks to his people as well as hears their petitions. By the mouth of his minister he repeats the messages of his grace and the commandments of his law, and reiterates to the mind of forgetful man those doctrines which make wise unto salvation.

Under the Christian dispensation the House of God is, in the strictest sense, a place of moral instruction, a school of religious knowledge. There, while the mind is affected with a sense of the divine presence, and the heart warmed and softened by devotion, the seeds of instruction find ready admission and take easy root. The most favorable opportunity exists of imparting high doctrine, of inculcating correct principles, of fixing the love, admiration, and desire of excellence, and of enforcing the most commanding motives. The influence which the House of God may thus exert—established as it is in all the little communities throughout a christian land—is immense. And there is something worthy of the Divinity in the simplicity with which this mighty engine operates. This provision of houses for the worship and instruction of all the people, is peculiar to Christianity. The most efficacious mean of moral improvement, order, and happiness ever devised, which gives a power and security independent of human law and beyond human law, teaching every man to be a law to himself—has yet been unknown except to the Christian church. It has caused a connexion between the services of religion and the duties of life which never elsewhere existed : not even in the ancient dispensation to an extent by any means equal, and among the other nations of the world not in any degree. For with them, religion was little better than a substitute and excuse for morals ; while their moral teachers dealt out formal wisdom and maxims of philosophy, independent of the sanctions of religious truth. The Christian church unites them all, and dispenses their benefits to all ; and thus erects

a combination in favor of religion and morality, strengthening the influence of each by the authority of the other, before which the errors and superstitions, the sins and the wretchedness of each must finally be overthrown.

Observe this a little more minutely and trace its operation. In the house of God—on every seventh day—in every little community throughout a Christian land—those who associate together in the ordinary walks of life, families, friends, and neighbors, are assembled together—to unite in religious offerings, to hear the reading of the records of revelation, to listen to the discussion of the most interesting and important topics, and to receive serious and friendly exhortations concerning principle and duty. Can the influence of all this be other than immense? They are thus kept familiar with the best knowledge, devout impressions are prevented from entirely fading from their minds, the power of the highest motives is not suffered to be altogether lost. They get the habit of regarding themselves as subjects of a moral government, accountable to God, and destined to eternity.

How many are thus instructed in religion and duty, who would have learned nothing of them elsewhere! To how many is this the only place of information on the chief topics of human interest and obligation! For even the Bible they would not read, except they had learned its value here; and the world would soon destroy their sense of God and the restraints of conscience, if they were not reminded of them here.

How much is here done for the prevalent tone of public morals and manners, and for the general healthiness of public opinion! How vast an influence is exerted for the sobriety and integrity even of those, who personally feel little interest in the truths of religion! The instructions of God's house spread a light through the community, which exposes all objects in a clearer and juster character, even to the

eyes of those who care nothing for the source of that light. Unprofitably as many preach, thoughtlessly as many hear, it is yet impossible to prevent this indirect influence of christian institutions. If all who preside over them were powerful and faithful, and all who attend them conscientious and teachable, there could be hardly an assignable limit to their efficacy. If there were 'burning and shining Lights' in all the candlesticks of the Lord, their rays would extend and meet, and create a universal illumination—in which error could no more find a lurking place, from which sin would flee away, and where truth and righteousness would establish their dominion, immoveable and everlasting.

What does the past experience of the world teach us? Whence have truth and virtue hitherto derived their influence, and what has been the main instrument of establishing knowledge, civilization and happiness among men? Ask the Legislators of mankind. They did, in the ancient empires of the world, all which could be done; and yet, in their most favored days, barbarism and dissoluteness maintained a hardly interrupted sway. Ask the Philosophers of mankind. They were among the most gifted of their race, and what man could do, they did. Their names are among the choice treasures and proud monuments of human nature. Yet how small their impression on the condition of the world! how powerless their exhortations, how inefficient their maxims, and how soon the surrounding darkness of society closed over and extinguished the lustre which shone about them! No,—it is not human law nor human wisdom—It is the power of God's Truth proclaimed from God's Temple. This it is which has reached the mass of men, and changed the face of the world; which has pervaded even the obscure places of the community, and found its way to the very heart. And therefore man has risen, and knowledge has spread, and virtue has been honored, and happiness has advanced;—and they must still advance—from step to step,

from glory to glory. Every temple that is built, every assembly that is collected, every herald of the gospel that is stationed on his watch tower, does something to urge forward the perfection of the human race, and the spiritual emancipation of the world.

And what more? All this is 'not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed'! The light of God's House is indeed the light of the world; but it is the light also of eternity. It promulgates the promise of the life that now is; but it also opens entrance to the life that is to come. And who shall describe its full influence on the individual character, and the peace and joy it communicates to the believing soul? There it finds its God. There it gains enlarged conceptions of divine truth, and is admitted to boundless prospects of attainment and bliss. There it goes 'from strength to strength' in holiness and love, and begins that race which is peace on earth and which ends in peace in heaven. It finds its place 'a little lower than the angels,' and anticipates a home among the perfected spirits of the just.

Thus it is that man's improvement and happiness, his interests in time and in eternity, the present welfare of the human race, and the final felicities of the heavenly world, are all collected around the House of God, and impart an intense interest to its purposes of Worship and Instruction.

To these great Purposes WE SOLEMNLY DEDICATE THIS HOUSE. We set it apart from all secular uses, and declare it consecrate to the glory of God and the instruction of man. To the worship of Almighty God—the Infinite Lord of heaven and earth and all worlds—the Fountain of all being, the Source of all blessing—the God of nature, whose glory is on all his works—the God of providence, whose agency is in all events—the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the cloud of whose presence rested on the tabernacle, and whose spirit spake by the prophets—the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom he visited man with his love, and spake the peace of an everlasting hope—to His

service we devote and dedicate this Temple. Built for his worship, be it sacred to his praise! Let no purpose of earth be ever pursued within it! Hallowed be the lips that speak here, humble be the prayers that ascend, in the faith of the only Mediator, from fervent devoted hearts! Let no lukewarm piety ever desecrate these walls! no insincere offering be ever laid upon this shrine! but that sacrifice of the soul, which God will not despise!

We consecrate this house a place for the Instruction of man in the will of God. We devote it to the message of truth and grace which came by Jesus Christ. Let no other message be declared here! Let no inventions of man mingle with it, no authority of man control it, no human creed bind it! Let it be proclaimed, free, unmixt and glorious, as it fell from the lips of its holy Author, and bow the souls of thousands to its simple majesty!

We consecrate it to the glorious principles of the Reformation—the sufficiency of scripture, the right of private judgment, and fearless free inquiry. They are the Chartered Rights of Protestantism. Never let them be surrendered! Let them find here an honored home, and a manly defence —till the world shall acknowledge their authority, and the reform of the church be complete!

We consecrate it to the cause of Truth, Righteousness, and Charity. The Truth—whatever it may be, wherever it may lead—Let it rise and reign, and all error perish! Righteousness—let it be taught in all its strictness, and enforced by all its sanctions—and every compromise with sin meet only anathema and detestation! Charity—no spirit but the spirit of love, no voice but the voice of gentleness and peace! Never be the echoes of these walls waked by reviling and denunciation, but the still small voice of charity be whispered within them forever!

We consecrate it to the cause of man's salvation—for which Jesus suffered, for which Apostles toiled, for which Martyrs died. Here may the way of peace be ever open!

Here may the light of eternity ever brightly shine! And multitudes, multitudes, in all coming generations, be trained here for the worship and felicity of heaven; that, when we shall be gone to the dust, and this structure have disappeared from the earth, and the earth itself be no longer in its place, there may yet be found many spirits among the redeemed above, who shall look back with joyful recollection to this place, as to them 'the House of God and the gate of Heaven!'

Brethren of this Christian Society: The place of your future solemnities you have now fully given up to the purposes for which you designed it. May God accept your offering, and record his name here! Beneath his smiles you have labored, and brought your work to a conclusion: not indeed with uninterrupted prosperity; for He, who chastens every son whom he receives, and makes our whole lot a state of trial, has been pleased to cast a cloud over you. But this you have used, we trust, as the religious man uses all trials—to strengthen, not to shake your faith, to confirm your adherence to duty, not to dishearten you. And now, with brightening prospects and undiminished zeal toward God, you present yourselves at his altar and devote to him the fruit of your toils. We rejoice to have come up with you, and to aid you in the pious duty. We sympathize with you in the mingled feelings of the occasion. Our hearts have risen with yours on the notes of the first anthem which has ascended from within these walls, and on the incense of the first prayer which has gone up to the Father of spirits. We unite with you in the solicitudes and hopes which swell your breasts, and in the deep interest with which you regard your future religious temple, and its consequences on your character and peace.

There is a feeling connected with the place of worship, which none can understand but the devout mind which has experienced it. It is like the fire-side home, the centre of many emotions and interests, hallowed by a thousand tender

associations and dear recollections, of which he who has never partaken them can know nothing. Joys are there, with which the stranger doth not intermeddle, and sometimes, alas, a bitterness is there, which the heart only knows. To you, therefore, this simple house where you are to worship, is an object of as deep interest and importance, as to the returning Jews was the magnificent Temple they were rebuilding. It is not reared indeed beneath the inspection of a prophet, nor has its progress been anxiously watched by all the tribes in the land. But the affections of many Christian hearts have been turned to it, and are seeking here the blessing of the Lord of Heaven. You do not consecrate it, as that ancient temple, in pomp and sacrifice and splendor—here is no cloud of rolling incense, no hecatombs streaming blood, no thick darkness to manifest the glory of Jehovah. But humble as it may be, it is yet the house of God and the gate of heaven—in simpler majesty devoted to a simpler faith. It is to be the sabbath-home of many believing and devoted hearts, who will seek and find their Father here. It is the consecrated place where the communion of your Saviour's love is to fill you with peace and hope, and the pure water of sprinkling to welcome your offspring to the covenant of their Lord. It is the holy school of religious teaching, where your children are to attain wisdom and strength before they go out into the perilous highway of life. It is the spot of sacred repose, to which you look for refreshment from the wearisome bustle of the world, and where you expect to find open for you the only fountain of sufficient solace and support amid the sorrows and trials of earth; where strength shall be gained for temptation, and peace imparted to the penitent, and spiritual light pervade and gladden the waiting soul. Until the veil which now separates this outer court from the Holy of holies shall be withdrawn, and your spirits be ushered into the mansions of eternal light, to enjoy the unclouded presence of God, and worship in the Temple not made with hands.

THE SOURCES OF PUBLIC PROSPERITY,

A

DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED IN NORTHBOROUGH, APRIL 9, 1829,

ON THE DAY OF THE PUBLIC FAST.

BY JOSEPH ALLEN,
MINISTER OF NORTHBOROUGH.

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DISCOURSE.

PSALM CXXII, 6.

"PRAY FOR THE PEACE OF JERUSALEM."

In the language of Scripture the term *peace* is one of very comprehensive meaning. It denotes, not merely the absence of discord and strife, but *good things in general*, whatever contributes to the well-being of individuals or communities.

To pray for the peace of Jerusalem, is, therefore, to pray for whatever tends to improve the condition of man, as a member of the community; for it is a community, and not an individual or a single family, to which the text relates.

We have then, in the words before us, an exhortation to offer up our prayers for the public good; and, it is, for this purpose, that, in obedience to the call of our chief magistrate, and in conformity to venerable usage, we have met together this day in the house of prayer.

We are invited to pray for the peace of our Jerusalem; to invoke the blessing of the Almighty on our rulers, and on our country; on our civil, and on our religious interests.

But it will be useful to regard ourselves, not merely as citizens of the Union, or of the Commonwealth, but as members of a smaller community. It is the prosperity of this town, and this religious society, in which we are most deeply interested, and for which, therefore, we should feel the greatest solicitude. Our influence is limited, in a great measure, to those immediately around us. Comparatively speaking, we

are very slightly affected by a change of the National Administration, or by the result of our State Elections. Not that I would speak lightly of the right of suffrage, one of the dearest privileges of freemen, or recommend an indifference to political concerns. But, whatever be the personal character of the men who are called to preside over our national affairs, or to administer the government of the State, every one must perceive, who has thought at all on the subject, that it is the condition of that smaller community in which we live, the character of the people by whom we are immediately surrounded, their intelligence, their manners, and their morals, which most essentially affect our happiness.

My remarks, therefore, on this occasion, will be understood as having an especial reference to the state of things existing in this place ; and it is my earnest desire to offer something, which, with the blessing of heaven, may be profitable to us all.

We are exhorted in our text, *to pray*. But it is obvious that prayer will be of little avail without corresponding efforts. Prayer is indispensable ; and it must be sincere, fervent, and habitual. But there must be a putting forth of the hand to labor, as well as the uttering of devout sentiments.

What then are we *to do* to promote the well-being of this town ? what are the chief sources of public prosperity, so far, at least, as depends on human agency ?

This very important question I shall attempt to answer in the sequel.

But before I proceed to an enumeration of particulars, allow me to offer a few preliminary remarks.

I take this opportunity then to solicit, what I have a right to expect, and what I have no doubt will be cheerfully accorded to me, a candid hearing, and a favorable construction both of the sentiments I may utter, and of the motives which have called them forth. Should any of the remarks which I may offer, *appear personal*, I trust you will give me credit for sincerity, when I assure you, that they are not intended to be such. Should any appear *severe*, I beg that it may be considered, whether they are not just and seasonable ; and I trust

that I shall not be accounted an enemy because I tell you the truth.

In stating what are the sources of public prosperity, I may have occasion to animadvert on existing evils. But I hope to do this in a kind spirit, without exaggeration, or any disposition to overlook or to disparage the blessings we already possess. These are many, and of inestimable value ; and it were doing you great injustice, my christian friends, to leave them out of our consideration in making up an estimate of the present condition of this community.

It should be, to us, a source of much joy to know, that we have the credit of being a peaceable, united, and well-ordered community ; that our schools sustain so high a character; that our public institutions are so well supported ; and that we have thereby gained the reputation of being an enlightened and public-spirited people.

But while we rejoice in the enviable distinction we have attained, we should be anxious to do every thing that we can to merit and retain our good standing. We must not, if we would be safe, view with too much complacency, our past or present condition. We must open our eyes to the dangers which beset us, and vigilantly guard against the beginning of evil. The tendencies of our nature are not such as to authorise the expectation, that good objects may be effected, and good acquisitions retained, without effort and vigilance. Should the sentiment once become prevalent in any community, that mankind are so well disposed towards that which is good, that they need no prompting, no admonition, no reproof, to secure their virtue, I should consider the case of such a community as hopeless.

No, my hearers, however just and well earned are the commendations which are bestowed on us as a people, it behooves us not to be high minded but to fear. The lesson cannot be too often, or too earnestly inculcated, that self-complacency and presumptuous confidence, whether in individuals or in bodies of men, naturally lead to carelessness, degeneracy and ruin. " He that exalteth himself shall be abased, while he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Considerations of this nature should induce us to survey our condition, not with the partiality of professed advocates, who feel bound to defend every thing right or wrong, in the cause of their clients ; but with unbiassed minds, that we may know just how we stand ; what blessings we have to lose, and what danger there is of our losing them ; what evils exist, and by what means we may hope to remove them.

1. And first, in regard to worldly interests, for these have an important bearing on the prosperity and well being of a community, I would exhort every man, without delay, to take the necessary measures to ascertain on what footing he stands. Let him enquire, especially, whether his income, from whatever source it is derived, is sufficient to meet his actual expenditures ; and, in case it is not, let him endeavor to find out the cause of the deficiency, and see if it is one which can be removed. The complaints are loud and incessant of the times ! the mass of the community, it is said, are growing poor. Our farmers cannot carry on their farms without involving themselves more and more every year in debt ;—our mechanics barely gain a competency by the dint of hard labor, and many of them spend all, or even more, than they earn—and we are fast coming into that state of society which exists in the Old World, where the wealth of the country is collected together in great masses, instead of being held, as it has hitherto, for the most part, been in New England, by the great body of the people. Now I wish you, my hearers, to ascertain, every man for himself, whether this representation is just. I would have every farmer, every tradesman, every mechanic, every day-laborer, every member of society, ascertain the facts in relation to himself, that he may know precisely where he stands. The subject is one of immense importance. For, should the case be as has been represented ; should that state of things occur, in which the cultivators of the soil generally become tenants, instead of owners and lords of the soil ; and persons of either sex expend the whole amount of their income in dress and vain amusements, so that they can lay up nothing for the maintenance of families, and for meeting the wants of sickness and old age ; and the labor-

ing classes generally become destitute of property—then, farewell to the prosperity of New England ; farewell to our civil and religious liberties—then may we write on the gates of our cities, and on the posts of our doors, *Ichabod—the glory has departed.*

For, with a state of abject dependence, as all history and observation concur to teach, will be associated ignorance, with all its train of evils. A sense of character will be lost, and no concern will be felt for the public welfare, and no efforts made for the support of public institutions.

I do therefore conceive, that any, the least, approach or tendency to this state of things should be viewed with deep concern by every christian, by every patriot, by all who have at heart the public good ; be met with determined resistance ; and, if possible, be counteracted.

2. I would next refer to our moral and religious condition, which it is also important, in the highest degree, that we view in a just light. Allow me to advert to several particulars ; and I do it for the sake of presenting to you distinct subjects for contemplation. I will first call your attention to the subject of Intemperance.

It is now, I think, nearly five years since several resolutions were passed, with great unanimity, at a public meeting of the inhabitants of this town, expressive of their sense of the alarming evils of Intemperance, and their determination to do something to check them. What those resolutions were, is well known to most of you, and I refer to them, that you may be induced to enquire to what extent they have been regarded : whether they had a lasting or only a temporary effect.

It is encouraging to know, that within the last few years, much has been effected in many parts of our country for the promotion of temperance ; that, in some towns, as we learn from authentic documents, an annual saving has been made, in the article of ardent spirits alone, equal to the amount of all the taxes for the support of schools and public worship ; that, in other places, ardent spirits have been, by voluntary agreement, excluded from the public stores, and the practice of drinking them almost wholly abandoned ; that, in almost ev-

ery place, many enterprising farmers, mechanics, and persons of every grade, have come to a resolution to abandon them wholly, except in cases of sickness ; and that the most enlightened and respectable physicians have borne their decided testimony against the practice of using them in any quantity, or on any occasion, except for medicine in case of sickness.

Many encouraging facts of this kind might be adduced ; facts which show, that much can be done, for that much has been done, for the suppression of an evil, which by some has been hitherto regarded as an evil without remedy. We know indeed, from what we ourselves have seen and experienced, that the customs of society do change from time to time, and that, among ourselves, some pernicious practices once common, have grown quite obsolete. I allude particularly to the practice of drinking at funerals, and social parties, which is almost wholly laid aside.

It is for you to consider, whether any practices remain, which ought not to be countenanced ; any, which are productive of serious evils to the community ; and are a great drawback on our prosperity and happiness as individuals and members of society. If such evils do exist, and any thing can be done by precept or example, by individual or combined efforts, to remove them, it is for you also to devise the means and to apply them to the case in hand.*

But there are other evils, which seriously interfere with the peace and prosperity of a community Dishonest dealing between man and man ; all false and exaggerated representations in the matter of buying and selling ; all attempts to defraud a creditor of his dues ; all oppressive treatment of the honest and unfortunate debtor ; every species of lying and deceiving with intent to injure ; the neglect or contempt of religion and religious institutions ; a disregard to the solemn sanctions of an oath ; the irreverent use of oaths, and all profanity, in common discourse, tending to destroy the sense of religious obligations ; lewdness in conversation or in conduct ; immoralities of every description ; the violation, in a word, of any of God's holy commandments ; all these are not only

* See Appendix.

sinful in their nature, but pernicious in their effects ; and, when we pray for the peace of our Jerusalem, we virtually pray for their suppression and removal. Whether these evils or any of them exist, and to what extent they exist, in this community, it is for you to determine.

Under this head I would refer you to the existing state of that portion of this religious society denominated *the church*, and solemnly ask, whether there is nothing in it which calls for regret and humiliation. With affectionate concern, I would ask whether, as a body, we walk worthy of our high vocation; whether we are as conscientious and as circumspect in our conduct, as attentive to the duties of family religion ; as earnestly devoted to the service of our Redeemer, as becomes those who have made a public profession of their faith in him, and an avowed surrender of themselves to Almighty God ? Whether we do not need to be stirred up to increased diligence in our christian walk ; to do our endeavor, by mutual counsel and exhortation, to " strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die," and to offer up our fervent supplications to Heaven, that God would " revive his work in the midst of these years," build up and prosper this Church of his Son ; and " add to it" from time to time " of such as shall be saved ?"

With these preliminary remarks, which have been extended much farther than was at first contemplated, I enter on the question proposed at the commencement of this discourse, viz : What are the chief sources of public prosperity, so far as this depends on human agency ?

The following enumeration is far from being complete, but may suffice for our present purpose.

The prosperity of a community will be advanced by the prevalence of industrious and economical habits ; by the general diffusion of knowledge ; by moral integrity or uprightness ; by the exhibition of a public spirit ; by union and harmony ; by the domestic virtues ; and lastly, by an enlightened reverence for religion and religious institutions.

To each of these topics, your attention will be invited in order.

1. Under the first head I am to speak of the prevalence of industrious and economical habits, as one of the sources of public prosperity.

Few persons in any community can afford to live in idleness, or to expend large sums in the purchase of luxuries, or the gratification of a passion for costly dress or vain amusements. And instead of lamenting this as an evil, I rejoice that it is so. No condition in life is so conducive to individual virtue and happiness and the well-being of the community, as that, which demands regular habits of industry and thrift.—Where it is not so ; where the earth yields its fruits spontaneously, or is tilled by the labor of slaves ; and the white population are accustomed to spend their time in idleness ; we are told that effeminacy and corruption of morals prevail to an alarming extent. I rejoice, therefore, that our soil will not yield its increase but at the price of labor, of hard and habitual toil. It is this, which tends to make, and to perpetuate a hardy, virtuous and respectable yeomanry. It is this, which, together with our literary and religious institutions, has given to New England her high distinction as *the land of steady habits*, a distinction which we should be mainly anxious to retain.

I would therefore, exhort every one to the cultivation of habits of diligence and thrift. Let every man resolve, if it be possible, that he will live within his income. Let it be the ambition of every one, who labors on the soil, to be the owner of a farm, which he can cultivate and improve agreeably to his own taste, and leave for an inheritance to his family, when he shall be taken from them. He need not seek for great things. Let not his desires be foolishly extravagant.—But let him aspire to be the owner of a freehold estate, free from debt ; to have a house which he can call his own, and of which no man can rightfully dispossess him ; and let the mechanic and the tradesman do likewise. And in order to this, let them guard against the ruinous effects of intemperance, improvidence and waste. Let them not, for the gratification of vanity or of appetite, incur expenses which they can ill afford.

Let not the frugal habits, so necessary to the independence and well-being of persons in moderate circumstances, be exchanged for the costly apparel and the luxurious entertainments, and the expensive amusements, which none but the rich and great can support. Let not the habits of the city be transplanted into the country, where they are entirely out of place. Let not those who must get their bread, if they get it honestly, by the sweat of their brow, expend their hard earnings in aping the rich with their income of thousands. Let them rather conform to the condition in which Providence has placed them ; and strive to render that condition an easy and a pleasant one.

It is not, and it should not be regarded, as disreputable for any one to regulate his expenses of food and clothing and amusement by his ability to pay for them. Indeed it were disreputable for him to do otherwise. A person renders himself obnoxious to censure and ridicule, who is perpetually struggling to conceal his poverty under the cloak of pride.— He should be willing, nay, he should resolve, to conform in his habits of living and in all his habits, not to the fashion of the times, not to customs of society, but to his circumstances, and not be ashamed that the world should know it. And if, on this account, any should charge him with meanness and a sordid mind, he can boldly reply to the charge, that he is commanded to "render to every man his due ;" and, that he cannot easily be convinced, that it is either mean or sordid to be honest, to pay his just debts, to seek an honorable independence, to provide for future emergencies, to lay up something for sickness and old age.

2. Another source of public prosperity is the general diffusion of knowledge.

It cannot be necessary on this occasion to say any thing to prove, what I am sure you are all ready to admit, that it is better, more desirable, to live in an enlightened, than in an ignorant community. I shall therefore, at present, simply add a word of exhortation on the subject, especially as it is a subject, which has often been discussed in this place.

I would say then ; let every one bring distinctly before his mind the advantages of a good education and resolve to contribute his part to render this an enlightened community. Let every proper encouragement and facility be given to children and youth for obtaining knowledge. Let persons of every age, so far as they have opportunity, make themselves acquainted with polite and general literature, with the history of former ages, and especially with that of our own country.— Let them acquire a knowledge of themselves ; of the wonderful mechanism of the human frame, and of the intellectual and moral powers with which they are endowed.

Let them peruse the great book of nature, which is spread before them ; learn the principles of science, and observe the marks of the Divine wisdom and benevolence, which are visible in every department of Nature's works.

Let suitable encouragement be given to all attempts that are made, whether by means of Lyceums, or by other instruments, to diffuse useful knowledge, to improve the systems of education, and to raise the character of our schools.

Let our Libraries be well stocked with a variety of useful and interesting books, and faithfully used. Let young persons seek the cheap and solid and satisfactory pleasures of knowledge, instead of the more costly and frivolous, and seductive pleasures of sense.

Let this be done, and it is impossible to doubt, that a vast improvement will take place in the condition of society, and that knowledge will be found to be the hand-maid of religion and the nurse of virtue.

3. I am next to speak of moral integrity or uprightness in our dealings one with another. The subject is one sufficiently familiar to most minds ; and it may be difficult to present it in any new and striking lights. Every one knows well enough what it is to be honest, at least so far as concerns the conduct of others, however erroneous his judgment may be concerning his own.

It would be unpardonable, however, in an enumeration of the elements of which the peace of the community is made up to omit so important an item as common honesty.

It is called *common* honesty ; but, perhaps, it may be found on enquiry, that strict integrity, moral uprightness, is one of the rarest of virtues.

It may well be doubted whether very loose and inadequate views are not entertained by many on this subject ; and whether much, which passes for honesty, could bear a very close and critical inspection.

No man can be accounted strictly honest, who, in his dealings with others, practices any kind of fraud or deception.

He is not honest, if he do that which he would think it wrong for others to do in like circumstances.

An honest man may make a profitable bargain ; but he may not do it by false or exaggerated statements, or by any attempt to deceive by his looks or words or actions. He must *speak the truth in his heart*, that is, without equivocation, with upright views and aims, as in the presence of God. An honest man will not intentionally wrong any one. He will neither borrow, what he does not in good faith mean to return ; nor purchase, what he has neither the ability nor the disposition to pay for.

He is not an honest man, who, when he becomes involved in debt, withholds his property from those to whom it belongs; or, who attempts, in any way to defraud his creditors of their just demands. If strictly honest, he will, on the contrary, make every effort in his power, by diligence in business and the practice of rigid economy, to be able to comply with the Apostles precept—" Owe no man any thing but to love one another."

An honest man will be contented with his honest gains, whether great or small ; and, if he can become rich only by the sacrifice of principle, he will choose to remain in a state of the most abject poverty.

Nor does honesty relate solely to overt acts. " He is an honest man," to borrow the sentiment of an ancient heathen writer,* " not who merely abstains from acts of injustice, but who having it in his power to do wrong has no disposition to do it ;" that is who is honest in thought as well as in deed.

* Philemon in Col. Gr. Maj.

No one I think, can doubt therefore, whether the practice of honesty contributes to the well being of a community. It must be evident to all, that it is one of the most important sources of public prosperity.

If, my hearers, you are constrained to view the subject in this light, resolve, that, whatever may befal you, you will hold fast your integrity and not let it go. The character of an honest man is a most enviable possession. And it is an attainable one, attainable by all. You may be reduced by misfortune to poverty and want ; but you can be honest still. You may be assailed by temptation to defraud or wrong your neighbor ; but you are not obliged to yield to their force. No human power can compel you to do that which in your heart you disapprove and abhor. No man can compel you to swerve from the strictest rules of integrity. Resolve then, that, whatever may befal you, you will do nothing to forfeit the esteem and confidence of honorable men ; and it can not be doubted that you will thereby consult your own true interests ; at the same time, that you will promote the interests of the community to which you belong.

Loathe and abhor the character of the professed swindler ; of him, who makes it his business to deceive the unwary, and to defraud the ignorant and the simple, and then boasts of his dishonest gains. Shun him as you would shun a pestilence. Hold no communion with him. Be not thou a partaker of other men's sins. For " the curse of the Lord is in the habitation of the wicked."

" Woe unto him," says the prophet, " that buildeth his house by unrighteousness and his chambers by wrong ; that useth his neighbors service without wages, and giveth him not for his work."

It is a trite proverb, the truth of which has been tested by the experience of all ages, that *honesty is the best policy.*

Let then your whole conduct be regulated by a regard to this maxim ; and think not, that, in despite of the laws of God and man, you can ultimately gain any thing by the practice of dishonesty and fraud ; but that reproach and shame, the tor-

ments of a guilty conscience, and the wrath of a just and holy God, will be your certain and bitter portion.

4. In the 4th place, the prosperity of a community will be promoted by union and peace.

What is there that gives a town a worse name, or that tends more surely to the dissolution of society, than division and strife ? Who would not prefer to dwell in a wilderness rather than among a people given to contention.

And, on the other hand, how good and how pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity ? Oh, who that is wise, would not make great sacrifices for the maintenance of union and peace ! for the prevention of such bitter and lasting feuds, as have recently broken up many of our towns and parishes, and made them a by-word and a reproach.

It cannot be doubted by any one, who is acquainted with the history of New England, that much of its prosperity and glory has resulted from the circumstance of its being divided into small corporations, the members of which are closely united, and feel a warm interest in each other. It is to this cause, probably, as much as to any other, that we were indebted for our sucess in the war of our independence ; for the readiness which the great mass of the people manifested, on that trying occasion, to make unexampled sacrifices in defence of their liberties.

To the same cause we are mainly indebted for the support which has been given to our schools and religious institutions.

Accustomed to meet together for these and other purposes the inhabitants of a town become acquainted with each other ; feel an interest in each others welfare ; and are disposed so long as they remain in peace and harmony, to strengthen and encourage one another in every good work.

But, let a spirit of contention now enter one of these little communities, and how sorrowful a change ensues ; behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth !

Now, families are divided against families, and members of the same family against one another. They who once lived in habits of intimacy, and felt a tender and affectionate interest in each others welfare, now regard each other with

jealousy and suspicion and hatred ; the pleasures of social intercourse are interrupted ; mutual confidence is withdrawn ; mutual forbearance is no longer deemed a virtue, real faults are exaggerated and converted into crimes ; and detraction is busy at work, in searching for faults which do not exist, and in fabricating and circulating false charges with the intent to prejudice a rival sect, or a private enemy.

A spirit of contention enters into every thing. There are parties in the election of town and parish officers. There are parties in the management of Schools ; there are parties in the Church, and out of the Church ; and, through the mists of party, every object is viewed, and appears in a distorted and unnatural shape.

Such are some of the evils resulting from a spirit of contention ; and that man's mind must be singularly constituted, or his heart sadly perverted, who can regard such a state of things with other sentiments than those of regret and sorrow.

Guard then against every thing which has the least tendency to introduce such a state among ourselves. Be admonished by the example of other towns ; and, Oh ! " study the things which make for peace and the things whereby one may edify another. Suffer no root of bitterness, springing up, to trouble you, and thereby many be defiled." "Let all bitterness and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice ; and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another ;" and let the only provocation given be that, to which the Apostle exhorts us, " provoking one another unto love and good works."

5. An enlightened public spirit in the members of a community may be mentioned as another important source of its prosperity.

Wretched is the condition of a people, so absorbed by private interests, as to feel indifferent to the public weal, and as never to be willing to make any sacrifices but for their personal profit or aggrandizement.

Let such be the character of a people and what would become of our public institutions ? What security should we have that provision would be made for the support of schools,

and public worship ? Let every thing be valued according as it ministers present worldly profit, and learning and religion will be regarded as affairs of small moment, and as not worth the price that is paid for them. In such a state of things, instructors of youth, and public teachers of morality and religion, will be viewed with jealousy and envy, as an unproductive class of laborers, and as undeserving of patronage and support. Instead of laying out money for building school houses and churches, it will be deemed wiser to expend it in building barns, or in buying land ; or, perhaps, in ministering to the gratification of the animal appetites. Neither learning, nor religion is meat, or drink, or clothing ; and the thoroughly selfish man will be likely to view them as worthless, in comparison with silver and gold and other possessions, that can be seen and handled and weighed in scales.

But enviable is the condition of that community, in which an opposite spirit prevails and bears sway ; where public institutions derive an honorable support from the free contributions of the people ; and a readiness is manifested to aid in the accomplishment of benevolent objects.

Let it be our ambition to maintain our title to the honorable distinction of being a liberal and public spirited community Let not selfish considerations be allowed to preponderate and bear down an enlightened regard to the public welfare. In the words of the Apostle, " let no man seek his own," that is, his own *exclusively*, " but every man another's wealth." Be ready to make sacrifices for others as well as yourselves. Take a lively interest in the prosperity of the town ; and do what you can to raise the standard of morals, and to improve the condition of Society. Be generous, public spirited, open-handed, free-hearted, never weary in well doing.

By pursuing this course, you will be instrumental in carrying forward the great plans of the Almighty. You will be fellow-workers with God himself, in conferring benefits on society, and at the same time you will gain for yourselves a rich reward, in the delightful consciousness of benevolent aims and deeds, and in the favor of your Father in heaven.

6. Again, if you wish to promote the prosperity of the community, cultivate the domestic virtues, the charities of private life.

Let the parental, the conjugal, and the filial relations be well sustained. Let family government be administered with mildness and firmness and wisdom.

Let children be accustomed to obedience from their earliest years, and taught to treat the aged and their superiors with becoming respect.

Let a spirit of forbearance and gentleness and mutual kindness be displayed by all the members of the domestic circle ; and let there be a fixed determination, on the part of each, to comply with the advice of the renowned king of Israel ; "leave off contention before it be meddled with."

Nothing can be more certain, than that the prosperity of a community must keep pace with, and indeed is made up of, the prosperity of the several families composing that community.

If vice and disorder reign in families, they will also reign in the community. If families flourish, and the domestic virtues abound, the well being of the community will be secured.

This connection between private and public prosperity is most intimate. It is exhibited in the history of every country, and in none more than in that of our own New England. It was, principally, to the prevalence of the domestic virtues among our ancestors ; to the maintenance of family government and of family religion ; to the reverence with which the Bible and religious institutions were regarded by young and old ; to the attention that was devoted to the religious instruction of children ; to the regard that was paid to the sacred bonds of wedlock, and the mutual confidence and esteem of husband and wife ; it was to these, and other domestic virtues, that our forefathers were indebted for their unexampled prosperity. And their example should teach us, that if we would inherit their prosperity, we must inherit their virtues.

7. Last in the enumeration which was made of the sources of public prosperity, was an enlightened reverence for religion and religious institutions.

It is well known, that what was emphatically denominated *the reign of terror* in France, was preceded and accompanied by a general contempt for religion. The Lord's Day was stricken out of the calender ; and a new division of time into portions of ten days each, was established by law. Ministers of religion were deprived of their livings, of their liberty, and, often, of life itself. The Churches were demolished, or converted into places of secular business or vain amusements ; and, on the tomb-stones of the dead, was inscribed the motto, "*death is an eternal sleep.*"

You need not be told, that this heaven-daring impiety was associated with unheard of cruelties and universal corruption of manners ; and, finally, led to the most oppressive despotism which the world ever saw : thus conveying to all future ages, the important lesson, that the prosperity of a community is inseparably connected with the fear of God, and an enlightened reverence for religion and religious institutions.

I say an *enlightened* reverence; for there may be, I admit, a weak and superstitious reverence, which shall be productive of as great evils, almost, as universal scepticism and utter contempt of the Divine authority. And, indeed, the former commonly leads to the latter, as the history of all ages sufficiently shows.

But, while you endeavor to gain just and enlightened views of God and of his requirements, do not, in contempt of all the lights of history and experience, imagine, that the public prosperity can be secured independent of the aid of religion ; that temporal sanctions, considerations of earthly interest, are sufficient to secure obedience to the laws and to maintain good order in society.

What are the sanctions of an oath, but a belief in an overruling Providence, and the fear of a just retribution ? What confidence can you repose in one, who discards religion, and treats every thing serious with contempt and scorn ?

Men may be knaves under the mask of religion ; but, if any thing will deter them from knavery, it must be *the religious principle*, when properly developed and cultivated.

Men may talk much and well on the subject of religion, and yet, not hesitate to defraud their neighbors. But all such grossly deceive themselves, if they suppose, that they are religious men ; or that, in any case, religion and knavery can dwell together in the same bosom.

No ; if there be any considerations whatever, which will penetrate the inmost recesses of the heart ; and arm the soul with power to meet the conflicts of temptation ; and prompt men to deeds of justice and beneficence and mercy ; it must be such as are derived from a true and holy faith.

Nor, let any imagine, that religion can be preserved in a community separate from religious institutions. These were designed by God, as the means of preserving and advancing it. And whenever the experiment has been made, to ascertain whether the institutions of religion might be safely dispensed with, the result has been disastrous. It may be laid down as a general rule, that, the longer public worship is discontinued in any place, the greater will be the moral degeneracy of the people ; and those places where an *enlightened* regard is paid to the Sabbath, and christian ordinances and institutions, are, commonly, I believe, most distinguished for the prevalence of the moral virtues. So intimate is the connexion between religion itself and the means ordained by God for promoting it.

I would then, affectionately exhort you, my brethren, as you value the peace and order and prosperity of the community, to cherish in your own bosoms, and to endeavor to inspire into others, a sense of religious obligation ; a reverence for the Almighty ; a dread of offending him ; and a desire to secure his favor.

Especially, let advantage be taken of the warm and generous feelings of youth, to create in them an early bias in favor of religion. Let them be subjected to the benign and holy influences of christian instruction, whether imparted from the sacred desk, at the Sunday School, or in the domestic retreat. And let religion, be presented to them in so attractive a form, that she may appear lovely in their sight.

Let them be taught to feel, that God is good ; that he is their father and friend ; and that to love God and to be like him, is to be religious; and that to be religious is to be happy.

Parents, teachers and guardians of the young—great is the weight of responsibility which devolves upon you. To you it is given in solemn charge, to provide for the coming age; to see that the commonwealth receives no detriment from the ignorance and vices of the rising generation. Much, very much, depends on you, in regard to the future condition of this town.

The children and youth, committed to your care, are taking lessons in learning and morals from you ; and it infinitely concerns them and you, that these lessons be wise and salutary.

Oh ! let not their principles be perverted, their morals corrupted, their hearts defiled by sin. Save them ; Oh ! save them, if it be possible, from that moral degradation into which so many have sunk and perished. Spare no pains, no sacrifices, no cost, that may be requisite, in order that they may come upon the stage of life, prepared to act well their several parts.

A virtuous and well educated youth is the best hope of the community. Soon will the men of this generation be gathered to their fathers ; and their places will be filled by those, whose characters are now forming under the various influences to which they are subjected.

If then, you feel solicitous on their account ; if your views are not limited to the present time, but extend to future ages; if it is your earnest desire and humble prayer, that this town, that this religious Society, should flourish and enjoy the blessing of true religion, when you shall be laid in the dust ; let it be your first concern to bring your children under the holy influences of christian instruction ; to inspire them with the fear of God, and the love of man, and the desire of moral excellence.

I rejoice to believe, that, among the youth of this place, there are many "thus minded ;" many, who will hold fast

their integrity, and labor to qualify themselves for duty and usefulness.

May I indulge the delightful hope, that many of my young friends ; that all, who now hear me, will resolve to become good and useful members of the community ; and, to this end, diligently cultivate all those virtues, on which the prosperity of a community is founded.

But, after all, it is the blessing of Jehovah that maketh to prosper. "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it : except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."

To him, then let your prayers be directed. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem." And may "the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means."

APPENDIX.

As allusion is made to certain measures, adopted several years since, by the inhabitants of this town, for the suppression of intemperance, and, as it is possible, that some into whose hands the pamphlet may fall, may wish to know what these measures were, it has been thought advisable to insert them, in an Appendix, as they stand in the Town Records.

It may be proper to premise, that the subject, to which these measures relate, was treated in three discourses, delivered in this place, on Fast Day, and the following Sabbath, April, 1824.

"May 3d, 1824, it was voted, nearly unanimously, in full town meeting, to choose a committee to investigate the subject of the excessive use of ardent spirits."

The committee chosen at this time, consisting of the Selectmen, and eight others, reported, at an adjourned meeting, May 24.

The Report of the Committee was read, and accepted, and is as follows:

"To the inhabitants of the town of Northborough, in town meeting assembled.—Your committee, chosen to investigate the subject of the great and growing evil of Intemperance, have taken the matter into their most serious consideration, and are of opinion, that the excessive use of ardent spirits in this town, as well as in many other places, has become seriously alarming, and forebodes great and ruinous evils. This, no observing and considerate person will presume to deny; and that something ought to be done to check the progress of this growing vice, is equally evident: for this lamentable fact is visibly depicted on the countenances of many individuals, some of whom are engaged in this ruinous practice, while others stand anxiously waiting, to see some method adopted, whereby the evil may be repelled. Therefore, your committee beg leave to recommend the following measures to be pursued:

That the inhabitants of the town of Northborough endeavor to lessen the use of ardent spirits in their families; that the military officers use their exertions to prevent persons from intoxication on training and muster days;—that the inhabitants use their best endeavors, by their example, advice and entreaties, to persuade the intemperate to become temperate; that a committee of six be chosen, to assist the Selectmen, in selecting intemperate persons and others, to be posted up, according to law; but that no person be posted up till next September; hoping that, in the mean time, the idle will become industrious, that the intemperate will become temperate, and that those who spend their earnings for ardent spirit will

spend part of them for the comfort of themselves and families, and lay up a part to support themselves and families in sickness and old age, that they may not be burdensome to their friends nor the town; and that all persons may become valuable and useful members of society; and that this town meeting be adjourned to the first Monday in September next, at one o'clock, P. M. for further consideration on the subject. All which is humbly submitted to the inhabitants of the town of Northboro,' by their committee. ISAAC DAVIS, Chairman.

Northborough, May 10, 1824.

The adjourned meeting did not take place, but the good effects of these measures were manifest to all.

The practice of mixing liquors in the Stores was voluntarily, and by mutual agreement, abandoned, and the quantity of ardent spirits consumed in this town was said to be very considerably diminished.

It is gratifying to learn, that the plan of entire abstinence has been adopted by some of our farmers and mechanics, and it is confidently hoped, that the number of such will, ere long, be greatly enlarged.

That much has been done, and is now doing, in other places, will appear from the following extract from the Second Annual Report of the American Temperance Society.

"Two hundred and twenty two Temperance Societies are already formed, whose titles and locations are known. Five of these are State Societies, (exclusive of that in Massachusetts, which was formed many years since, and of which mention was made in our first report,) viz: New Hampshire, Vermont, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Illinois. There was also one formed in Montreal, in June last, for Lower Canada. The remainder are either County or Town Societies, chiefly the latter. Of these, thirteen are in Maine; twenty three in New Hampshire; seven in Vermont; thirty nine in Massashusetts; two in Rhode Island; thirty three in Connecticut; seventy eight in New York; six in New Jersey; seven in Pennsylvania; one in Delaware; one in Maryland; five in Virginia; two in North Carolina; one in South Carolina; one in Kentucky; one in Ohio; two in Indiana.

"Besides these, there are as many more, if not a larger number, concerning which we know no more than the fact that they exist, and the parts of the country where they are located. The number of the members of these Societies, range from ten to four hundred. Most of them are of recent origin, and, of course, have made no other report, than that of simply announcing their formation. Those which are of older date, and have passed their first or second anniversaries, evince a rapid and unexpected increase in their numbers; and are able, almost uniformly, to state, that the influence of their example and efforts has effected nearly a complete reformation in the places where they are established."

SERMON IV.

BY REV. EDWARD B. HALL.

FEAR, AS A RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLE.

PROV. 28—14. HAPPY IS THE MAN THAT FEARETH ALWAYS.

THAT must be a singular kind of happiness, many will say, which springs from constant fear, or is subject to it. We have been led to suppose, that the happiness which religion confers is of a directly opposite character. We have been told that it is calm, peaceful, unruffled, a perfect love casting out fear, an immoveable confidence, a principle of trust and assurance so deeply seated as to be beyond the power of disturbance from within or without. But how if this be so, how on any principle, can he be called happy who *feareth* always? How can there be constant fear or much fear in trne religion? Is it not the very purpose of religion to relieve men of fear? Is not fear usually and justly represented as the companion and torment of the wicked man, the sting of a guilty conscience ill at ease, and far as possible from happiness? Moreover, is it not wrong to associate re-

ligion with fear, to address its demands and promises to a principle so low, selfish, and doubtful, and attempt to build the hope of happiness on such a foundation?

I am supposing such questions to be put by those who know little of religion except speculatively, who have never felt its power either to alarm or quiet, to awaken fear or hope, but have listened coldly to its declarations, and watched its operation upon others with a curious and suspicious eye. These, however, are not the only persons by whom such questions are asked. By many who do know something of the power of religion, who have attained certain degrees of strength and happiness under its influence, similar inquiries are sometimes made and similar doubts expressed. It is one of the subjects on which widely different opinions are held, and in regard to which men pursue a different course, both in inculcating and receiving religious truth. By some, the motive of fear is constantly addressed and used, as that in which the work of religion must begin. By others, it is seldom addressed and but little trusted, from the belief that it is an unworthy motive, that the religion which springs from it cannot be of an elevated or permanent character, nor its happiness worthy the name. Yet again, most of those who require religion to begin in fear, take from it this character and influence in its subsequent periods and more advanced stages, encouraging in its stead a feeling better expressed by assurance and boldness; while those who are not willing to have recourse to fear alone or chiefly, think that in some degree it should always prevail, to check presumption and temper the confidence even of the mature and apparently confirmed Christian.

As in most cases, there is no doubt truth and error, good and evil, in both these views. Fear is a part of man's nature, and therefore may and should be employed in the work of disciplining and perfecting this nature. It is wrong to neglect it, and it is wrong to use and trust it altogether. Many of the mistakes in regard to it, on both sides, may be traced perhaps to a neglect of observing how differently the word fear is used in scripture, and how differently it exists and operates in life, according to the character and circumstances of the individual. Let us look at these. Let us ask what is the teaching of scripture and what the lessons of experience, as to the kind and degree of fear essential to the formation of religious principle and the attainment of religious happiness.

I. In scripture, the word fear does not always bear the same signification. Few words have a greater variety of signification. It sometimes denotes religious knowledge and sometimes religious character, sometimes one and sometimes all of the motives by which men should be drawn to God. It often stands for the whole knowledge or service of God; as when the Psalmist says, 'I will teach you the fear of the Lord.' Again, 'the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever,' meaning the law or word of God. Often it expresses the religious affection or the principle of religious obedience in general. As when God says of his people, 'I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them and their children.' Again, it denotes the fear of God as a God of might and terror, doing his pleasure in heaven and earth, holding at his will the property, health and lives

of all, and often sending out his messengers of power and destruction. In the Old Testament this is frequent. Yet it is to be observed that in most of the descriptions and appeals there, it is the fear of temporal consequences only that is addressed. While in the New Testament this fear is expressly discarded and rebuked, and the appeal is to the dread of God's displeasure, not as an angry but as a holy God, the fear of the consequences of sin upon our souls not under the castigations of his wrath, but under the wise, equal, merciful administrations of his justice, operating in part here and in full hereafter. Instances of both these meanings and uses of fear are so familiar that they need not be cited. I will only say, that while the appeal to the fear of consequences, the fear of punishment, is less common under the new dispensation than under the old, it appears to me to be not less but more direct, pungent and alarming. And for the very reason just mentioned, that it uses more clearly and constantly future sanctions, spiritual and eternal consequences. 'I will forewarn you whom you shall fear; fear him, who, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell—yea I say unto you, fear him.'—We, know indeed that 'God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love, and of a sound mind?' Yet we are to 'serve him acceptably with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire?'

Of several other significations given to the word fear in scripture, I will mention but one. It is often used in the sense of humility, self-distrust and self-reproach, the fear of falling short of the requisitions of the gospel, the fear of not living in sufficient fear, but through con-

fidence and self-exaltation perverting high powers and darkening a glorious destiny. This is the principle, this the motive, which I believe is most earnestly addressed, and represented as a duty, a security, a treasure, as knowledge, wisdom, happiness. 'Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.'—'Be not high-minded, but fear.' It is not a depressing, but a restraining fear, the distrust not of God, but of ourselves. It is the part of wisdom and the choice of virtue. 'The wise man feareth and departeth from evil.' —'In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence;' for it secures that obedience which is the fountain of life. This is a state of feeling which we cannot be too earnest to inculcate and sustain, a temper of mind that will best become us always, in our strength as well as our weakness, in conflict and victory, in rejoicing and in sorrow, in life and death. 'Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.' 'Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.' And with the same import our text declares, 'Happy is the man that feareth always'—not that happiness springs directly from his fear or always attends it, but that the one is the best promise of the other, the security of virtue, the way of life.

The scriptures then set us the example of caution and discrimination in our use of the word and in all appeals to the principle of fear. We are not to employ it as the chief instrument or attach to it the principal importance, in the work of conversion and salvation. Nor are we by any means to leave it unemployed, as if in no sense and no case it were worthy or salutary. Still less may we, while we use its form and sound, soften it down in its meaning and application into a tame,

smooth, unimportant thing. It is a weapon that should be wielded with a strong and resolute though kind hand, and its power be searching and heart-stirring as well as discriminating. According to our use of it will it be efficient or worthless, a high or low motive, animating or depressing, the courage or the cowardice, the liberty or the bondage of the soul. For there is a fear of God whose tendency is to enslave and debase, and another fear of him working powerfully for the opposite result. The first is a servile selfish dread of punishment only, and may exist without a particle of religious feeling, though there can be no doubt it sometimes leads to religious feeling when wisely guarded and directed. The other is humble reverence, that filial awe, that desire to please and fear to offend, which will govern the feelings of every respectful grateful child to an earthly parent—how much more to God!

These sentiments, as they sometimes exist, are wholly unlike in their motive and influence. The one is the fear of the wicked, the other of the good man. One has regard to ourselves, our own safety, the other to God and his love. The first you may often see terrifying the imagination of the young, harrowing the feelings of the timid, filling with unutterable horror the soul of the wretched offender, who, stretched upon the bed of death, is made to feel the power of an arm that he has long defied, and to tremble at the approach of realities too near and solemn to be longer scoffed at or pushed aside—and yet in all this, can you be sure religion has any place? The other principle you may see extending a mild but undisputed sway over the whole character, inspiring awe, kindling love, checking every

irreverent word and thought, mingling respect with affection and trust with humility, binding in strong yet cheerful allegiance, bowing the knee, the head, the soul, in reverence and obedience. They who are governed by no other or better motive than the first, cast away their idols only that they 'may flee into the holes of the rocks and the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.' How opposite the character—and must not the condition be opposite—of those who 'have *chosen* the fear of God' as their guide and shield, who have feared him to walk in all his ways and to love him! Their fear proves the 'instruction of wisdom,' tending to life. 'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.' 'Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him!' 'Happy is the man that feareth always.'

II. We will now turn to the direct lessons of experience. We will look to the character and conduct of men, and learn what they teach as to the place that should be given to fear among religious motives, how far it may be addressed and relied on in the formation of religious character.

There is an obvious difference among men in this respect, and from not noticing or not allowing for this difference, much evil arises. It is foolish and wrong to expect that all can be affected in the same way by the same considerations. It is wrong to require religion to begin in the same way in all. There is a difference of constitution, education, habit, time and place, which must produce corresponding differences in the susceptibility of religious impression. The appeal that sinks deeply into one mind and leaves its power immoveably

lodged there, may scarcely disturb the surface of another; and yet there may be the same willingness to be impressed in both. The same mind that is powerfully affected at one time may be wholly unmoved at another, though exposed to the same influence. In nothing is this difference more obvious or greater than in susceptibility to terror. One man is more easily alarmed than another, whatever be the cause of alarm. In religion, as in other things, his feelings may be easily wrought upon and his fears excited, by truths, appeals, events, such as would cause no emotion in others; and this from a difference of nature or education, involving perhaps neither merit nor blame. This is plain.

Again, there is a difference in the course of events, the dealings of providence with different persons, by which the principle of fear is made to possess unequal degrees of strength and exert a different power, to act sometimes early and very strongly, sometimes late and with less violence. Sickness, calamity, bereavement operate often very powerfully upon the fears, and begin a good work. But they do not come to all alike, and they do not affect all alike. Many a wandering step have they arrested, many a cold heart have they touched, and quickened the listless spirit. By disturbing dreams of security, by shaking the sandy foundation, by rending ties that had closely entwined themselves with all the chords of life, they have forced the sad and bleeding heart to seek some other object of attachment, some better solace and refuge than the wide world can give. They have caused the eye which has seen the blight of its dearest earthly hopes, to look round for something which blight cannot reach. They have softened the

hard heart. They have brought down the high look. They have dispelled levity, checked presumption, moderated confidence, mingled joy with trembling, and hope with fear. In these and many ways do the visitations of providence, the messengers of terror, force reflection upon the thoughtless and fear upon the bold. Giving power to truths which before had been feeble, distinctness, vividness and alarming reality to things unseen or unheeded, they draw back with resistless hand the 'stout-hearted who were far from righteousness.' And thus fear is the 'beginning of knowledge,' the spring and principle of religion.

You will not ask, if we distrust and would overthrow or impair a work thus begun, a foundation thus laid? God forbid. We rejoice in it. We would help it. We would almost pray that this forcible appeal may be made, early in life, to every unreflecting mind and cold heart. We would give the name of blessing to such startling events and impressive lessons. We would beseech every one to heed them, to open his heart to their discipline, and let them act as powerfully as they will upon his fears; his fears for his security, for his hold on life, his prospect and hope in death. Let him tremble. Let him shudder at the gathering clouds and the lowering storm. And when, suddenly, without a storm, without the appearance of a cloud to awaken apprehension, a bolt is hurled which strikes to the earth one who stood at his side—when in a moment he sees the glow of health depart, the strong limb relax, the bright eye become dim, the full pulse cease its beating—when unalarmed, unconscious of danger, in all the confidence of manly strength and the joy of an unrestrained and warm

heart, a friend, a brother is hurried from him never to return—let it startle him, let it sound with a voice of thunder in his ears the forgotten truth, 'Thou art mortal—there is a God, there is a judgment, there is an eternity to come.' Happy will it be, if he quake before this voice, and flee to the ark of God for refuge. Happy, if his fear prove, what nothing else has proved to him, 'the instruction of wisdom.'

Yes, happy the man who *always* feareth thus, who lives under the constant influence of this thought, that he is mortal, frail, exposed to dangers unseen, liable in youth as in mature or advanced life, in health as in sickness, in the day of joy as in the night of sorrow, to have the firmest anchor he has cast here wrenched from its hold, his gay bark torn from its moorings and borne irresistibly down the strong tide, until the dark waves settle over it forever. Happy indeed is he, if in the power of this fear he shall be led to secure that anchor of the soul which is sure and steadfast. And who can be called unhappy with more reason, than he who never fears thus, who never thinks himself in danger? If they are to be pitied, who, 'because they have no changes, fear not God,' what shall be said of him who casts off fear when changes come, who cannot be made to feel his insecurity and seek a refuge, even by these awful warnings, these sudden calamities, the most eloquent ministers that God employs? The sleep which their voice does not break, is it not the sleep almost of despair, more dreadful in its stillness and coldness and night than that of the grave? Its prisoner shall awake, but when and where?

Yet this stupor, sad as it is, ruinous as it may be, is

sometimes nothing more than unconcern, the sin of thoughtlessness and recklessness, not of open rebellion, hardened guilt and mad defiance. If these also exist, if to the infatuation of indifference and obduracy a man add the guilt of setting at nought both the promises and threatenings of the power above him, if his heart is so completely locked in the embrace of the world and the grasp of sin that not even the thought of offended omnipotence and a day of account can disturb him—for such a man what hope is there? With no controlling sense of his frailty and exposure, heedless in the midst of danger and death, insensible moreover to the appeals of infinite love, unmoved by that tenderness and eloquence of entreaty which speak in the mission, the character, the teaching, the life and death of the all-glorious Son of God, an unconcerned witness of the anguish of the garden and the cross, and now dead even to the tremendous voice of a 'judgment to come'—what can be more pitiable or hopeless than such a state? Yet that there are those thus dead in sin, it would be the extreme either of ignorance or prejudice to deny. And would you hesitate to employ any means that God and religion permit, to wake such an one from his lethargy, and save him from impending destruction? If it be right to seize any instrument, or address any feeling, to resort even to violence and compulsion, to save a madman from rushing into the arms of temporal death, or to snatch him from those who would kill the body, is it not more than lawful, is it not a duty, a religious duty, to use any probable or possible means of preventing the destruction of the soul?

It is one of the strange inconsistencies of man's

boasted wisdom, that while in defence of his own or another's short life, he resolves that he will employ any instrument, make any effort, submit to any peril or loss that can be named—he will see himself and thousands more rushing headlong towards the gates of spiritual darkness and death, without one great exertion or earnest prayer to prevent it—nay, doing much, it may be, to make that coming doom more certain, speedy, dreadful. O man, where are your feelings? Where are your hopes, fears, anxieties, sympathies, the affections that give you the character or name of *man?* Where are they, and what can touch them? Are you selfish? Then seek to save, not to destroy yourself. Are you mercenary? Cast into those scales, in which you think everything is to be tried, the weight of eternity against that of time. Are you timid? Fear him who can kill not only the body, but that also of which the body is but the perishing shell. Or, are you generous, of large affections, eager to dispel gloom and rescue all from the bondage of fear, whatever effort or sacrifice it may cost you? It is a noble wish. Cherish it, act from it, give it free and full influence. But do not, do not limit its influence or its aim to a fleeting breath. Do not waste its energies upon bodies that carry within them the seeds of corruption, nor allow it to be satisfied with pleasures and glories that mock while they are grasped. Let your benevolence be directed to objects worthy of it, exalted, undeceiving, enduring. Let your forgetfulness of self, your generous and noble daring, be exercised upon something that will live to enjoy the fruits, and send back a blessing upon your own heart. You do not hesitate to inflict pain upon yourself or your best

friend, if life or health demand. With a firm hand you can sever a limb to save the poor body. And can you see the immortal mind sleeping on the brink of destruction, without uttering the cry of alarm? Are you too kind to terrify and distress, where nothing else will avail, and where, if there be not terror and distress for a few days, there may be ages of remorse and anguish?

But what if I do utter the cry of alarm, and thus break the dream of folly or sin? What if I succeed in awakening fears and trembling, in my own or others' breasts, by looking to the omnipotent arm bared and stretched over us in terror, or to the 'everlasting burnings' which the soul is feeding within itself and treasuring up against the day of their power and wrath? Is this a proper frame in which to approach God? Is it a right or worthy or acceptable service, that may spring from this motive? Surely not, if it be always to possess this character. He who comes to God with this feeling only, may be radically selfish and earthly, a loud flatterer but not a devout worshipper, a trembling obedient slave, not a penitent, grateful, dutiful, confiding and happy child. The fear of punishment alone, the dread of torment and hell, in this life or another, I cannot regard as a proper religious principle. In this life every one allows that to obey a parent or a master merely from necessity or the fear of punishment, is a low, slavish, poor service, deserving no reward or commendation. And may the principle or motive from which we serve God, be lower than that from which we serve man?

But why speak of *serving* God? What is it but drawing nearer to his likeness, elevating the mind he

has given, redeeming it from all that can debase or pollute it, making it meek and pure and holy as its Saviour, and perfect as its Father in heaven is perfect. This is to serve God. Ask if he does this or attempts it, who merely trembles at the thought of impending wrath, and you will know if the service of fear is the service of God. It is not. But it is not therefore always vain. It is not to be despised. There is weakness and fear in our best service. Our highest motives can hardly be free from an alloy of earth, so long as earth is the house not only of the body but of the soul. Selfishness will creep in and mingle with our offerings, where others least suspect it, and where we ourselves do not detect because we do not look for it. Well would it be, could we all serve God with that 'perfect love which casteth out fear.' But who does it? It is a height to which we can attain only by slow, often faltering, and often erring, steps. There must be a beginning, and that beginning will be in weakness, sometimes in trembling and dismay; for there seems an infinite distance between us and the mark, and our passions and folly, our sins and anguish and fears, hang upon us with the weight of mountains. We go on, it may be, only because we dare not go back or stop. We go on because we are driven. Yet surely it is better than if we did not go at all. For soon or late we may catch a glimpse of the heavenly city, and the bright beam that shoots from its golden portals, though single and impeded, may find its way to the dismayed and desponding soul. And then its darkness will begin to disperse. Sordid fear and servile homage may give place to something like trust and gratitude; and when

this joy has been tasted, the joy that must always come with a trusting, grateful sentiment, a new birth will ensue, a new creation break upon the enraptured soul. Trials will come again, dangers will press, fears may disturb and debase. But the awakened spirit will hold on its way, trembling only when it looks back upon the perils it has passed, and inward upon the frailty and sin that yet cling to it, trembling but not fainting, humble but not desponding, alarmed at the thought not of God but of its own past infatuation, driven by no fear but that of failing to work out its own salvation. And may not this fear be its security?

I mean not to advocate a religion of fear. It is not the religion of Christ. I mean not to encourage by a word, if I could, the preaching of mere terror, fierce denunciations of wrath, coarse and impious pictures of a God of vengeance bathing the glittering sword of inexorable justice in 'the blood of damned souls.' He who is capable of using such language, he into whose *religion* (find for it another name,) such thoughts can gain admittance, be he preacher or hearer, sinner or professed saint, is an utter stranger to the elevated power, the joy, the serenity, the heaven of religion. He may have fled from hell, but heaven he has not seen, he has not conceived. He knows not how to aspire to it or to create a longing for it, for he knows not what it is. Frightened he may be from the broad road of destruction, but he has hardly entered the way of salvation. He may frighten others, and fill them with tormenting fears, and plunge them into a present hell not unlike that whose lurid flames he depicts as eager to devour them. From these they may fly with frantic

haste. But they have very far to go. The work of religion is yet to be begun. And it must begin in the knowledge of this fact itself, that to fly from hell is not to enter heaven. To be goaded from sin by its own sting, is not to love virtue. If we have gone down till we stand on the brink of the yawning gulph, it is well that we start and shudder. It is well that we spring back and frighten or drag others with us. But let it never be forgotten, that while this may be the beginning of a better course, while with not a few it probably is the beginning of a religious life, it is a beginning that needs more than any other to be watched and guarded. It is not religion now at the very best. It may lead to religion, but take care that it be not a religion of calculation or necessity, much more than of freedom and affection. If it be always fear, fear such as this, the lowest, most cowardly and debasing kind, it will be a gloomy, narrow, frigid religion, a bargain with the tormentor to pay just enough to be released from his hands; not a covenant of love with the gracious Father, consecrating to him in gratitude, reverence and joy, the body and spirit that are his. This is religion. To this must the service of fear be raised. Do not discard it, do not despise and condemn it. But lift it up. Take it out of the dust in which it grovels, and point it to the skies. Enlighten its darkness, disarm its terrors, see that it pass not suddenly from fear to boldness, from the depths of despair to the heights of presumption.

No, let not boldness and presumption ever come. Let there be *fear alwáys*, with every one of us, in every stage of our christian journey. Let there be fear of

doing at best only our duty, and of measuring our duty by our chance of safety instead of our powers and privileges. Let there be fear arising from our frailty, frequent delusion, and constant peril, from the deceitfulness of the heart, from the blinding and benumbing power of sin; fear from the thought of the vast interest at hazard, the immense work to be done, the high mark to be reached, the infinite capacity to be improved, the purity of the Saviour to be followed, the perfection of God to be imitated. Fear lest you forget or come far short of all this. Fear your passions and your prejudices, your enemies and friends, your dejection and your triumph the voice of reproof and of praise, the crowded world and the still closet. Fear always and everywhere, not with suspicion and terror, but with humility and caution. Fear God. Stand in awe of him. Let reverence temper every sentiment even of confidence and devotion, guard every ascription of praise, mingle with every aspiration after higher virtue, larger powers, holier communion. Fear unto watchfulness, a watchfulness not lessening but increasing with every step onward. Fear unto prayer, daily, hourly, unceasing prayer. Then will your fear be your confidence, your fortress, your panoply, your glory. You will 'perfect holiness in the fear of God.'

THE CONNEXION BETWEEN THE DUTIES OF THE PULPIT AND THE PASTORAL OFFICE.

AN

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS

DELIVERED TO THE

MEMBERS OF THE THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL

IN CAMBRIDGE,

OCTOBER 18 AND 25, 1830.

By HENRY WARE Jr.,

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INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS.

On meeting for the first time in this new relation, our thoughts are naturally directed to the Object for which this office has been instituted, and the Purposes which it is designed to accomplish. These are indicated with sufficient distinctness in its title. Leaving to other chairs the discipline which is to form Theologians, and furnish the teachers of the church with the requisite learning, it is the office of *this* to regard them in the light of Preachers and Pastors, and train them to the eloquence demanded for the pulpit, and the prudence and affections that must guide in the parish walk.

The connexion thus suggested between the Eloquence of the Pulpit and the Pastoral Care, is real and natural. These two branches go together and sustain each other. The minister is the better Preacher for having his heart warmed by intercourse with his hearers in private; and he goes to them in private with the greater influence and effect, because he carries with him the sacredness and sanction of the Pulpit. The full power of the Christian Ministry can be known only where both departments are exercised with faithfulness; and he entirely errs, who

fancies that he may neglect either, and yet command the best success in the other. It is to the union of the two, that we must look for the efficient and complete minister. And I think that we cannot better introduce our labors in this department, than by attempting to illustrate this important truth.

In order to this, it may be well, first of all, to state our idea of the terms we are using.

When we speak, then, of ELOQUENCE, as an essential requisite for the Preacher, and as something *to be taught*, we do not mean that high and singular gift, that extraordinary combination of powers and attainments, which the books describe as the property of the Orator; for men so splendidly endowed are but few in an age, and the church, if it must depend on them, would soon perish for want of advocates. But so far from being necessary, it is not certain that this highest eloquence is advantageous, or even desirable, in the pulpit. At any rate, it is not this which our institutions propose to teach, or which our students aim to acquire. What we propose is, simply, the power and habit to select judiciously, arrange clearly, and express forcibly and fervently, the topics suited to the pulpit, and to utter them in that distinct, correct, and pleasant elocution, which shall ensure for them the attention of the people. Thus much is capable of being learned; and this is what we mean by Pulpit Eloquence, when we propose it as something to be attained.

By the PASTORAL CARE we understand that duty toward individuals and families, which consists in personal acquaintance and intercourse for the purpose of knowing the character and condition of the flock,

that so the minister may be ready to seize opportunities of usefulness among them in either their temporal or spiritual relations, — by giving counsel, instruction, reproof, encouragement, consolation, according to situation and character. We do not regard it as consisting in what appears sometimes to be understood by the term, — the custom of simply visiting as a friend, or making calls from house to house ; much less, ceremonious and party visiting, or social tea-drinkings. Some ministers have much intercourse with their people, or rather with a certain portion of them, in this way ; but this is not doing pastoral duty. Social visiting is well. It has its uses ; indirectly, its religious uses. But pastoral visiting has *directly* its religious uses. The Pastor goes " from house to house," like the Apostles, with an expressly religious object ; and he executes it, not only in sympathizing with the joys and sorrows of his people, and administering advice in sickness, and comfort in affliction ; but also in communing with them on their religious interests, and applying himself to their spiritual ignorance, trials, doubts, perplexities, and progress. It is to this that we especially refer, when we speak of the advantages he must derive as a Preacher from the discharge of his duties as a Pastor.

The Importance and Necessity of the connexion between the labors of the Pulpit and of the Pastoral charge, may be discerned, first, *in the nature of the object to be accomplished by the ministry.* The ministry is designed to act on the characters of men, through the truths and motives of the gospel, so as to bring them in subjection to religious principle, and thus fit them for everlasting happiness. Not simply

to give instruction in religion, or gain assent to the doctrines of revelation; but so to press them upon men, that their *characters* shall be made conformable to them. Now character is a very complicated thing, dependent on a vast variety of circumstances and influences. Of these the pulpit can never furnish but a small proportion; and if none other be exerted in behalf of truth and heaven, the character of most men will be formed more from the prevalent influences of the world, than the holier agency of the ministry. To render this agency sufficient, it must be brought into operation at other times and in other relations — amidst the actual pressure of the circumstances and trials of life. And this is precisely what is attempted by adding the watchfulness of the Pastor to the eloquence of the Preacher.

The necessity of this junction may be seen, again, in *the nature of Preaching*, taken in connexion with *the character of the congregations addressed.* Preaching is instruction and exhortation addressed to a promiscuous audience of men and women of every rank, order, and age, with the view, as I have said, *to influence and form their characters.* And who does not know the extreme, the almost insurmountable difficulty, of so addressing a promiscuous assembly, that all shall understand and be affected? Such are the varieties of situation and education, of intelligence, disposition, and habit, of modes of life and thought, experience and trials, moral advancement and religious attainment, that a preacher may speak most instructively to some, while to others he is talking unintelligibly and idly. How necessary then, that he have other occasions and methods of access to them, than the formal com-

munications of the desk! And where is he to find these, but in the opportunities of the Pastoral Office? How otherwise can he reach, or know whether he reaches, a large portion of the minds committed to him?

We shall further discern this necessity, if we reflect, that the advancement of religion and the diffusion of its blessings, are just in proportion to its action upon individuals, and its effect upon single characters. We are too ready to regard Christianity as designed to operate on society, and accomplish a great work for the progress and reformation of the world. Even when we look at a single parish, we are too apt to see it in this general view, and address it as a community, rather than as a collection of individuals. In consequence of which, our preaching is general and vague, our aim uncertain, our exertions too little direct and concentrated, and our success doubtful and partial. Now this barren generality in preaching, proper views of the pastoral office would do much to correct. We should then come down to individuals; our great object would be the improvement and welfare of certain persons, for whose particular case we are concerned. We should understand their wants, trials, and dangers, and be anxious to apply to them the faith and power of the gospel. We should think our work best done, when we found that the very persons with whom we hold daily intercourse in the common walks of life, have been led one by one to think of God and duty, and prepare for the retributions of a future world. This action on individuals would tend peculiarly to warm our hearts, and enkindle a generous zeal within us.

It would animate us in our studies. It would give life, particularity, and directness to our preaching; and it would prove the most effectual way of producing that general improvement, which we so desire to witness in society.

Such being the necessity and importance of the connexion between these two branches of ministerial action, let us proceed to consider the support which each furnishes to the other.

I. And FIRST, of *the support which the Pastoral Care furnishes to the Pulpit.* This may be seen in relation both to the actual labors of the pulpit, and the preparation for them.

1. We will begin with the preparation for them. Nothing is of so much consequence here, as *the spirit in which this preparation is made.* If it be done simply as the inevitable routine of a professional calling; or as an intellectual exercise; or an exhibition of talent; or a rhetorical display; it is evident that the moral state of the preacher's mind is altogether unfavorable to the production of a truly religious effect. He has no proper apprehension of the subject he is treating, and not entering into it rightly himself, he cannot rightly represent it to others, nor attract to it their regard. We are not to wonder that those who thus go to the pulpit, miserably fail of all valuable influence; and that religion becomes heartless and dead under the management of men, who have no higher aim than to get through their stipulated task as hirelings. Religion is so much a matter of sentiment and sympathy, that the universal rule of oratory is in no other profession so true as in this, — that the most efficient speaker is he who most throws his own soul

into his eloquence. Now to enable him to do this — to prevent the weekly duty of preparation from degenerating into a mechanical performance, or selfish ambition from taking place of the hearty disinterestedness of a Christian preacher, the pastoral office is an essential aid. The man who is familiar with the situation, trials, and wants of those whom he addresses; who goes up to the pulpit from their firesides and their chambers, — full of interest in their characters, and sympathy with their condition, — feels that he is not meeting a congregation in the abstract, but men and women whom he knows and cares for, and who are waiting to catch from him something which will suit their necessities, and be for their guidance and improvement. He cannot sit down, and prepare for such an assembly a dry dissertation in metaphysical philosophy, or a learned criticism on an unimportant text, or a sentimental essay of which he has studied only the ornaments and graces. But, urged by natural and spontaneous emotions, impelled by the current of his own affections, with perfect directness, and that best of all energy which results from simplicity of purpose, where all is real, and nothing affected, artificial, or forced, — he will prepare an address suited to their actual condition, and with a single view to their profit. As Butler observes there is a certain *unity*, so is it equally true there is a certain *power*, "in the words of one who writes with simplicity and in earnest;" — a power, which perhaps is nowhere seen more strikingly contrasted with weakness, than in the case of the preacher, who prepares a set discourse on religion without any acquaintance with the actual religious wants of

man, and as an intellectual exercise alone, — and of him who, glowing with sympathy for his flock, thinks only of imparting instruction and pressing upon them expostulation, as a friend with a friend, or a parent with his children.

2. Beyond this general effect, which lies in the state of his affections, the pastoral relation aids the preacher's preparation by directing him in *the profitable choice of subjects.* It is quite obvious, that in the vast fields of theological and moral truth, there is room for infinite variety of choice. If one select from this variety at random or at the suggestion of the moment, he may indeed frame excellent discourses on most important questions ; yet if they be not suited to the character and wants of the hearers, he will be a thoroughly unprofitable preacher. So also if he follow the bias and taste of his own mind, and the train of his favorite studies, he may treat great subjects, and treat them well; but while he gratifies himself, he may neither please nor benefit the congregation. The only just rule, by which to decide among the ten thousand subjects and texts which may suggest themselves, is, their fitness to do good to the particular class of persons addressed. And what will enable one to determine this point so correctly and judiciously, as the intercourse of the pastoral relation? He who holds that relation, knows what instruction is needed by them and useful to them. He is at no loss to decide what classes of topics he should treat. They are pointed out to him in his daily walks, and in the character and condition of all around him. When he sits down to the labor of composition, he finds them springing up in his mind, sug-

gested by some interesting event which has occurred, by some question he has been asked, by some conversation he has held, by some character he has observed; and in treating them he *knows and sees* the very individuals who will drink in his words like thirsty men, and rejoice in the refreshment and strength he imparts. What a prodigious help has he here! No languor and vacuity of mind to be roused and inspired, no unwilling drudgery, no heartless task-work; but warm, stirring, interesting occupation, — such as he only knows, who can unite the delightful glow which attends a successful intellectual exercise, with the affectionate serenity that waits on him who is engaged in the moral improvement of others.

3. The same remark holds good in respect to *the mode of treating and illustrating his subjects.* His pastoral relation will help to give an air of reality and suitableness to the whole method of discussion, and to the topics of argument and elucidation. Instead of being compelled painfully to seek them, and bring them by effort from afar, he will find them ready at hand, springing up all around him. He will not reject them because they are familiar. He will not be fastidious about their grace and beauty. He will speak to his people freely, as he would to one who should privately ask advice in his study, — anxious neither for profoundness of views nor elegance of diction, but only to make himself understood and felt. He will thus be led, I might almost say instinctively, to the most efficient and persuasive course; while another, studying out the same subject without the same application to real life, and with no guide but his scholastic rules of composition and the formal

dicta of logicians and rhetoricians, would go astray into useless subtilties and artificial declamation.

This is especially true in regard to that class of topics, which concerns the action of Christian truth on the mind and heart, and the exercises of the soul in its religious course. He that would preach profitably, must exhibit these faithfully and truly. He must treat of the emotions and conflicts that are going on within, and the strong trials and glorious aspirations of our spiritual nature, as things of fact and experience; an experience, which in its full extent, embraces every subject of thought and duty, affection and devotion, hope, fear, faith, and action, which can interest a pious mind, and make up the history of a responsible being. And this he must do in such manner as shall come home to the business and bosoms of those who hear, shall awaken a response in their hearts, shall reflect their image to themselves, and minister to them the needful guidance, admonition, consolation, and peace. For such a work, how valuable the preparation of the pastoral walk! It sends him back to his study fresh and glowing from intercourse with minds into whose recesses he has been admitted, inquisitive for truth, anxious for heaven, disturbed with doubt, shaken with remorse, trembling with despondency, overwhelmed by affliction, depressed by misfortune, struggling with temptation, or rejoicing in faith and hope; and he is prepared to treat the topics I have mentioned, with a feeling and reality which study never could have imparted, with a clearness and force which meditation and books never could have supplied.

I know no cure for false rhetoric like this. And whenever I witness the grandiloquence of the sophomore in the pulpit,— when I hear there the flashy commonplaces of flowers, and rivers, and clouds, and rainbows, and dews, — when I listen to the empty music of periods which are rounded only to be harmonious, and the tricks of speech which perform no office for the sense ; then I say that all this miserable foppery — as false to good taste, as it is to the souls of men and the truth of God — could never have been committed by a man who walked faithfully among his people, caring for their actual wants, and anxious to feed them with knowledge and understanding. What lawyer, I ask, who makes his client's cause his own, would dare to put it in jeopardy by such idle flourishes at the bar ? And therefore, beyond all instruction from books or masters in the truest eloquence, — that is, the eloquence which reaches men's souls, and, being adapted to their state, moves and changes them,— I would send a young man into the experience of actual life. I would say to him — ' Interest yourself in these people ; be governed by the supreme desire to bring them to God, in the love and acknowledgment of his truth ; and though you may not hear yourself extolled for beautiful figures and accomplished address, you will have the satisfaction of subduing many hearts to thoughtfulness and peace, who shall reward you with their gratitude at the resurrection of the just.'

4. Again ; the pastoral office aids the preacher in respect to *the delivery of his discourses.*

The best delivery is not that which conforms minutely to certain rules; nor that, which in vulgar estimation is accounted eloquent, — the loud, sonorous,

and showy. It is that, which best brings out the meaning of the discourse, and leads the hearer so directly to the sentiment, that the manner of its utterance fails to attract remark. This, at any rate, is the desirable delivery for the pulpit. Why is it so rare? and what are the greatest obstacles in the way of attaining it? First, undoubtedly, the ill habits created in childhood by reading what we neither understand nor care about; and next, the continued habit of reading mechanically, as we have been accustomed, without throwing our natural feeling into our manner. Every one knows how difficult it is to remedy the constrained and unaffecting utterance, which has thus come up with us from the dame's school. Lessons, criticism, example, painful practice at self-correction, may do something, — especially if we will always read pieces in which we feel interested, and practise in an excited state of mind. To read or recite in dull, cold blood, may only help to dishearten us, by showing how difficult it is to overcome our faults. It is working with blunted tools. An edge is given them to work keenly and happily, only by excitement.

But however much may be done in this way, I know nothing so likely to remedy the faults alluded to, and give birth to a *real* manner, as the consciousness that we are doing a *real work*, — in the midst of those who are seeking our opinions and advice, and whom, as acquaintances and dependants, we are desirous to serve, and with a devout sense upon our minds of religious responsibility. This is precisely the situation of the Pastor. The reality of his office, like that of the parental relation, thrusts aside all that is factitious, and imparts the air and tone of nature,

truth, and feeling. Let him give way to the impulse of his situation, and nature, truth, and feeling will make him eloquent — that is, will make him effective. The fetters of his unnatural school-boy habits will relax and drop off. He is once more a man, independent and self-moved. The drowsy, dronelike monotony of indifference, and the artifices of affectation, and the graces which seek applause, — all fly before the business-like sobriety of actual zeal. He is no longer a sounding declaimer, eager only for admiration; no longer a heartless drudge at an irksome task; nor a timid aspirant for fame, shrinking embarrassed from the eye and censure of critics around him. He is simply a friend among friends, and he speaks right on. He has a business to do, and he forgets every thing but to do it. If any thing will break down the disastrous habits of early and scholastic life, and teach him or betray him to speak like a man who is in earnest, and who therefore can touch other men, — it is the consciousness of sustaining a relation like this.

5. There is still another department of public duty on which the pastoral relation exerts a most valuable influence; namely, *the public prayers of the sanctuary.* These, no less than the preaching, — in order to be right, edifying to the congregation, and therefore acceptable to God, because going up from hearts which assent to them as they are uttered, — must be suited to the congregation; not only in phraseology and style, but in sentiment and topics; suited to them, not only in general, as they are men, possessed of a common nature, common wants, infirmities, and sins, but particularly, as they are *such* men, with their own

peculiar characters, situation, and exposure. It is perfectly obvious, that a devotional exercise, adapted to affect the minds and express the souls of one class of men, may be wholly unfitted to excite or represent another. A preacher may skilfully study the proprieties of thought and diction, and diligently select and arrange the addresses with which it becomes mortal man to appear before his God. Or he may, following the train in which his own mind runs when he pours himself out in private worship, dwell on those sentiments which are most affecting to himself in *his* state of religious experience and progress. In each case, the prayer, in itself, may be proper and excellent; yet as designed for the use of a given congregation, it may be barren and vapid. Without careful adaptedness, there can be nothing in it of that warm and fructifying vitality, by which public prayer should communicate life to the souls of the worshippers. And who can understand this essential adaptation, like him who lives among those whose mouth he is to be; acquainted with their temporal condition and spiritual wants, and familiar with their modes of religious thought and expression; who knows therefore what sentiment will find an echo in their hearts, what words will kindle a devout flame, and what there is already established within them to which he must appeal, if he would carry them on to higher spiritual attainments? He would fear that he should not lead them to pray at all, if he dealt only in the general language of piety, or in those peculiar views which satisfy and delight himself. He seeks to enter into their minds, borrow their associations, speak from their sentiments, allude to their trials, temptations, and sorrows, describe and specify

their condition, wants, and infirmities. He would thus in a manner, take them by the hand and lead them to the very mercy-seat, that they may pray themselves; while a stranger, being unable thus to sympathise with them, would be like the ancient priest, who presented an offering of which the people could only be spectators.

6. The Preacher's *success* is favored by the relation which he bears to his hearers as their Pastor.

The writers upon rhetoric insist much on the importance of conciliating the good will of an audience. They lay down various rules for beginning in such a manner as may disarm prejudice and win favor, — knowing how little is to be hoped from the highest eloquence, if received into unwilling or prejudiced ears. But for the affectionate pastor this is already done. He is in the midst of acquaintances and friends. Individuals, doubtless, there may be, cold, incredulous, inimical. But as an audience, he addresses those whose confidence he possesses, and who have put themselves in his power. Even in the case of those who doubt or disbelieve the doctrine he delivers, or whose sinful minds rebel against his entreaty and warning; his personal connexion with them affords the most propitious of all circumstances for bringing them to a *willingness* to listen and be improved. But as regards the auditory in general, — from him, whom they know, not only officially as a preacher of righteousness, but privately as a man of integrity and charity; from him, whose tested purity and sanctity render him as venerable at their firesides as at the altar; from him, entreating them in Christ's stead, — they receive counsel, exhortation, and reproof, as they would from no one else. At his expostulations they are less

likely to cavil and demur. His statements and style they are less prone to criticize and debate about. By his entreaties they are more easily pursuaded to self-examination. His instruction is consequently more salutary; he is enabled to address them with a freedom, confidence, and particularity, which nothing but the intimacy of his relation to them would warrant. Hence we have often known a discourse received with favor at home, which has given offence when preached to a congregation abroad. Hence too we may believe, that, as a general rule, religion will most flourish where the pulpit is not too frequently given up to strangers; but where the steady administration of truth from the same trusted lips, forbids gossiping criticism, unprofitable comparisons, and the itching ears which the Apostle long ago condemned as idle and mischievous.

Thus it is that the pastoral relation augments the circumstances propitious to the preacher's success. It is a great truth, that the same instruction and advice are interesting and useful, or the opposite, — are received with welcome, or rejected with contempt — according as our minds are affected toward him who speaks. This is the foundation of the ancient adage, "Neminem oratorem esse, nisi virum bonum." And hence the pulpit must always gain an increase of power, from the circumstance of its being occupied by men who are known and beloved of those who sit beneath.

Of course I do not speak without exceptions; and it will readily occur to you, what prodigious effects have sometimes been wrought by the preaching of strangers in strange places. This has been owing in part to the extraordinary powers possessed by those persons, and in part to the influence that novelty

always exerts over minds of a certain character, which sleep under whatever is familiar. But there can be no doubt that, upon the whole, the best, the most wholesome, the most permanent effects of religion are derived from its uniform and settled operation. Its most salutary agency is like that of the sun in perfecting the harvest, steady, equal, gentle, and perpetual. It is upon this idea that the regular institutions of the Christian Church are founded. And however sleepers may be sometimes most effectually awakened by the warning cry of a stranger, the whole flock is best watched and fed by regular and stated shepherds. For which reason it was, that, when Paul and the Apostles had gone through the world and waked its slumberers into life and faith, they then "ordained elders in every city," to watch for the souls which they had converted.

II. We come now to speak of *the favorable influences exerted by the Pulpit on the minister's labors as a Pastor.*

1. The advantage which it gives him, is mainly this; that it clothes him with a sanction and authority, which he could derive from no other source. Something of the ancient reverence, which belonged to the prophetic character among the Jews, attaches itself even now to the simple man who stands up in the Christian church as the herald of the New Testament. He is the proclaimer and expounder of the Divine will. The majesty and awfulness of the message passes to him who is commissioned to utter it. Wherever he may be, his image is associated with the pulpit, — that venerable place, consecrated to the denunciation of sin, to the proclamation of supernatural truth, and the invitations of Divine

grace — to which the mass of Christians look up, as did the Jews to the mercy-seat, whence the oracles came forth. There it was, that the people of his charge first saw him. Their earliest associations with him are as habited with the sanctity of that place — as a man at prayer — as a man pleading for souls — as separated from earthly objects, interests, and feelings, and wrapt up in subjects of infinite concern. This feeling always clings to him. It is never wholly separated from his image in their minds. They receive him, wherever they meet him, as bearing his office with him. In their houses and at their tables, he is still, like the prophet in the cottage of the Shunammite woman, "THE MAN OF GOD."

What an advantage may he thus carry with him into every office of Christian love! In going about like his Master to do good, what power! He can reprove as no other man can do, and where no other would presume; for there is a deference to his standing and office, which feels that to resist him, might be to resist Him who sent him. If divisions and strife arise, there is none who may so effectually step in as a peacemaker to reconcile and heal; for he is perceived to be only doing what he has declared from the pulpit to be a Christian duty, and thus practising the precept which he has often enjoined upon others. In affliction, too, and calamity, he can speak comfort as none other can. The same sentiment, the same words, — as the experienced pastor has often been surprised to observe, — are worth more from his lips, and go more deeply into the sorrowing heart. He is thought to be more familiar with the true and celestial springs of consolation; and the mourner seems to hear a higher comforter speaking by his voice, and saying, 'Peace, be still.'

Undoubtedly great prudence and discreet wisdom are necessary to secure perfectly all the advantages of which I speak, — especially in an artificial state of society, like that in which we live; and we may find instances in which they have not been obtained. But it must be because the minister has neglected and forfeited them. It is impossible that they did not once exist, and that he had not the opportunity to secure them. Many ministers seem not to be aware of the power which they thus possess. Many, through delicacy, do not call it into action as they might. Some fancy that the ministry ought to rely solely on personal character for its influence, and that no advantage whatever should be taken of the dignity which unavoidably appertains to the office; while many wield its influence with a fearful and tyrannical sway, which proves at once how real it is, and how immense would be its action for good, if employed only for legitimate and salutary ends. For such ends let it be sacredly used, as a most responsible trust. You cannot, if you would, descend from the holy eminence of the pulpit, and mingle with men unmarked. If you could, you ought not. And the distinction and power, which you gain from this circumstance, may be and should be cherished among the most valuable and beneficent talents in your possession.

You will not understand me as urging you to expect or claim authority and influence on the ground of your office alone; or to take advantage of the natural reverence of man for his priests, to assume a clerical superiority independent of your personal acquisitions and character. These must be conformable to your high place, or they will only sink you

the lower in merited contempt. This is neither the age, nor country, nor state of society, for ignorance and ambition to lord it over God's heritage, by any claim of office, or any pretence of a divine commission. All, therefore, that I have now intended, is, to state strongly — I do not know whether more strongly than the truth — the actual sentiments of men, which offer you a singular facility of doing pastoral good; a facility, of which you are diligently to avail yourselves. And this the rather, because the tendency of the times induces many ministers to fling away all advantages to be derived from their function, and because there is a tendency in the state of society to destroy the distinction between clergy and people. Now as far as I have stated it, this distinction is salutary, and these advantages legitimate and desirable. Beyond that point, I would be the last to plead for them, — certainly the last to rest on them as if they could answer instead of personal worth, intellectual fitness, and religious devotedness to duty. Indeed my next remark is,

2. That the Pastoral Office gains strength from the pulpit, because he, who is gifted to fill that place, bears with him the credit of talents, learning, and religious disinterestedness. He has been educated for his trust by long retirement for study and discipline. His mind is stored with various information, and in most circles within his parish he is regarded as farther advanced than others in all the branches of essential knowledge. Of course, then, he has all the advantage which such attainments and reputation always afford a man for influence with his fellow men. With many persons, this, and not his office of religious teacher, will be the actual ground of respect;

and with all, any inconsistency between his character and profession, any obvious worldliness of mind, selfishness of purpose, improper ambition, and habits of thought, feeling, and pursuit which indicate that God and Christianity are only secondary objects of interest, will destroy the influence of both his life and teaching. While simplicity and disinterestedness, conscientious and zealous devotedness to his benevolent function, and a life evidently modelled on his Master's, will secure to him a real, deep-seated power, which office and learning alone never could have given. Thus the ability to preach implies attainments and character, which secure deference and regard in the pastoral relation. But these will be at once changed into neglect and contempt toward him who claims them from the office he holds, and not from his fitness and fidelity in discharging it.

3. The Pulpit gives aid to the Pastor, by making impressions which offer occasions for personal intercourse, and thus create opportunities for addressing men individually on their religious concerns.

The work of impression and improvement which is begun by the pulpit, can never be completed by it. Let the word be preached with ever so much discrimination, fidelity, and particularity of application, it is impossible that it should be made at all times to suit the peculiar emergencies of all characters, and impart to each variety of spiritual necessity the exact direction and counsel which it requires. It is by attention to his flock in private, that the pastor is sure of being able to "give to each his portion in due season." And the best opportunities to do this, are the result of his public preaching. For however general it may

be, if it be faithful, it will reach some hearts, will touch some consciences, will excite some minds to thoughtfulness, penitence, and prayer. Where this has been done, how is the way opened to easy, natural, confidential communication on the deepest interests of man and the most affecting truths of God! How is his access to these topics facilitated, and how acceptable are his instructions and counsels! He finds ears opened to him which had hitherto been closed, and an earnest welcome to suggestions which formerly were received with at best a cool and repulsive assent. And it was the cry he had uttered in the pulpit, which thus "prepared the way of the Lord, and made his paths straight."

Hence, for this reason, he keeps an open and vigilant eye to discover the effects of his preaching. He follows Orton's advice, to converse with his people, not about his sermons, but on the subjects of them. He seeks to know the instances in which he has awakened a sense of responsibility, or stirred up a spirit of inquiry, or excited a thirst for knowledge. He desires to ascertain in what cases he has been misunderstood, and in what he has given offence; in what instances his expositions have failed to give satisfaction, and in what they may possibly have excited doubt. He may then be able to explain more clearly the points that were left in darkness, and pursue still further the subject of discussion. He may put an end to the offence, before it have become inveterate by time; may correct the misunderstanding before it have done its work of mischief or alienation; may answer the inquiry, before it is forgotten in the bustle of the world, and direct and fix the nascent interest in things divine. These are interesting offi-

ces of pastoral oversight, the occasions for which he owes to his public preaching. How much of what falls from him on the sabbath, might be lost, if it were not thus followed to a ripe result! How much of the precious seed of the word may be wasted, where there is no one to cultivate and guard its growth! And how valuable to the pastor, that public proclamation of the gospel, to which he is indebted for these propitious opportunities of communicating with men on their eternal interests!

4. These views may be still further illustrated, from the relation which he sustains to the young of his flock. These have been truly styled "the hope of the ministry"; and toward them his most devoted and shepherd-like interest must always be awake. Over their early impressions and growing characters he is to watch. Their parents he is to aid and prompt, in the arduous task of training them to purity, faith, and the love of God. In his parochial rounds, they are to be peculiar objects of his inquiry and attention. In the common schools, in the Sunday schools, and by his own personal instructions, he will labor for their knowledge and piety. And as he has been solicitous that they should receive at first the baptismal sign, he will be anxious to guide them onward to a suitable preparation for the other Christian ordinance, and introduce them to a worthy commemoration of their Lord. In all this charge of their religious progress, how much does he gain by being the teacher in God's house! How favorable is this circumstance to the success of his efforts! Who may find an easy way into their young hearts like him, whose image is interwoven, in their thoughts, with all that is reverend and

affecting in the worship of God, the history of Jesus, and the proclamation of things eternal? Who else may so guide, influence, mould them, as he who descends from the most sacred of places and of duties, mingling the affectionateness of an elder friend, with the authority of venerable office?

I have now said what I designed, to show the mutual dependence and reciprocal influence of the Eloquence of the Pulpit and the Pastoral Care. It is the union of these which forms the complete and effective minister. It is such ministers that we desire to send forth to the churches; "eloquent men and mighty in the scriptures"; who shall carry into the pulpit the best gifts of utterance and persuasion, and the most affectionate zeal for the salvation of men; and who shall move amongst their people with the kindness of friends, and the cheerful gravity of men of God. That *you* may become such, is to be the object of your and my unceasing and solicitous study.

You are called to be PREACHERS and PASTORS. It is for this that your whole discipline is to prepare you. The learning and exactness of the study, the musings and devotions of the closet, the watchfulness and discipline of daily life, all are to combine in fitting you for the solemn function of preaching God's truth to a sinning and slumbering world, and of guiding and counselling men in the most interesting concerns of the human soul.

Let me exhort you, then, to look forward habitually to the day when this charge of souls shall be actually in your hands, and to consider by what preparation you shall be able to acquit yourselves in it satisfac-

torily and acceptably. Contemplate the Pulpit, from which you are to speak to God in behalf of the congregation; and realize with what devotion and elevation of spirit you should be imbued, in order rightly to carry up the general offering of praise and supplication; — the Pulpit, from which you are to address men on the loftiest themes, and awaken their dull hearts to the spiritual things from which a sensual world is constantly enticing them; and realize with what holy earnestness of deep conviction, with what suavity and vehemence of utterance, with what clear and energetic reasoning, with what intimate knowledge of scriptural truth, of providence, and of human nature, you must be filled and glowing, in order worthily to execute so vast, so various, so delicate, so responsible a trust. Bring this thought before you. Keep it before you. Weigh it, feel it, understand it. You will then cheerfully devote yourselves to the severest toils, which shall be requisite to accomplish a thorough preparation.

Look also to the Pastoral relation. Consider what it is to be the religious counsellor of hundreds of souls, in every most trying and momentous crisis of their being. Consider what prudence you must study what wisdom and discretion you must cultivate, what readiness, what patience, what forbearance, what affection, what zeal. Above all, what need there is of a spiritual habit of mind, a fondness for religious thought, a heart always alive to sympathy with man, and ready to rise in devotion to God. You will then comprehend with what diligence you are now to cultivate your affections, and live as men of faith and prayer, that you may not then be strangers to the most spiritual part

of your labors, but may go to them as an accustomed and welcome occupation.

Understand, therefore, the importance and dignity of the work you are to undertake. There is no more momentous trust committed to human hands. There is no higher honor to which man may aspire on earth. Office more responsible, no one can bear. Duties more weighty and trying, no one can assume. It is the office, trust, honors, and duties, which once were borne by the Son of God. To esteem them lightly, to prepare for them sluggishly, is the extreme of folly and of sin. It is to seek and deserve disappointment, failure, and contempt. It is to dare the displeasure of Heaven, and darken the prospects of the soul. Be persuaded, then, to set your standard high. Act from elevated and disinterested principles, with a lofty aim, and a vigorous perseverance. In attainments and in character press on to the ALIQUID IMMENSUM INFINITUMQUE; or, in words more solemn and exciting still, "to the mark for the prize of your high calling of God in Christ Jesus your Lord."

It is to help you in this arduous, and almost fearful preparation, that I have come among you. I truly feel that I could receive no more interesting or important charge. And what power God has given me, what skill and knowledge experience may have taught me, may be more than occupied in the responsible task. I will do what I can. May God grant his blessing! I only ask of you to second my exertions, and give me your prayers.

Miss Helen Ware
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of her Brothe
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THE

Vision of Liberty:

RECITED BEFORE THE

PHI BETA KAPPA SOCIETY

OF

HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

AUGUST, 27, 1824.

BY HENRY WARE, Jr.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

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OLIVER EVERETT, 13 CORNHILL.
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Press of the North American Review.

THE matter of the following lines is not a poetical invention, but the simple versification of what was actually dreamed about thirty years ago. The dreams were repeated to the writer by one who heard them at the time, and to whose recollection they were brought by the exhilarating events of the last week. An English lady residing in Hingham, about 1794, imagined that there stood before her a vast and venerable building, which, as she was looking at it, began to wax hot and red, and at length, as if with the violence of the heat, flew to pieces and disappeared; when on the spot where it had stood, appeared a beautiful female figure, whom she knew to be the Goddess of Liberty. About the same time, a gentleman in Massachusetts saw in his dream a temple of wonderful magnificence and beauty. As he was approaching to enter it, a bell sounded from the dome with an uncommonly musical tone. He cast his eye up, and was surprized to see written upon it in golden letters the name of FAYETTE.

The irregular stanza was chosen, simply because it seemed to offer fewest embarrassments to a person writing in haste.

Vision of Liberty.

AN ODE.

I.

Is there some genial spirit of the night,
That rules the sleeping mind;
And pours within a more effectual light,
When the closed eye of sense is blind?
Is it some spirit, that in vision,
The secrets of futurity betrays,
Unveiling those bright scenes Elysian,
That wait for man in better days?

II.

Or is it but that Fancy strays
In bolder and prophetic ways,
When slumb'ring Reason drops his stern control;
And, from his plodding interference freed,
Resumes some native power to read
The unseal'd records of Time's length'ning scroll?

III.

The evening heavens were calm and bright;
No dimness rested on the glittering light,
That sparkled from that wilderness of worlds on high.
Those distant suns burn'd on with quiet ray;
The placid planets held their modest way;
And silence reign'd profound o'er earth, and sea, and sky.

IV.

Oh what an hour for lofty thought!
My spirit burn'd within; I caught
A holy inspiration from the hour.
Around me man and nature slept;
Alone my solemn watch I kept,
Till morning dawn'd and sleep resumed her power.

V.

A vision past upon my soul.
I still was gazing up to heaven,
As in the early hours of even;
I still beheld the planets roll,
And all those countless sons of light
Flame from the broad blue arch, and guide the moonless night.

VI.

When, lo, upon the plain,
Just where it skirts the swelling main,
A massive Castle, far and high,
In towering grandeur broke upon my eye.
Proud in its strength and years, the ponderous pile

Flung up its time defying towers;
Its lofty gates seem'd scornfully to smile
At vain assault of human powers,
And threats and arms deride.
Its gorgeous carvings of heraldric pride
In giant masses graced the walls above,
And dungeons yawn'd below.
Yet ivy there and moss their garlands wove,
Grave silent chroniclers of Time's protracted flow.

VII.

Bursting on my steadfast gaze,
See, within, a sudden blaze!
So small at first, the zephyr's lightest swell,
That scarcely stirs the pine tree top,
Nor makes the wither'd leaf to drop,
The feeble fluttering of that flame would quell.

VIII.

But soon it spread—
Waving, rushing, fierce, and red,
From wall to wall, from tower to tower,
Raging with resistless power;
Till every fervent pillar glow'd,
And every stone seem'd burning coal,
Instinct with living heat, that flow'd
Like streaming radiance from the kindled pole.

IX.

Beautiful, fearful, grand,
Silent as death, I saw the fabric stand.

At length a crackling sound began;
From side to side throughout the pile it ran;
And louder yet, and louder grew,
Till now in rattling thunder peals it flew.
Huge shiver'd fragments from the pillars broke,
Like fiery sparkles from the anvil's stroke.
The shatter'd walls were rent and riven,
And piecemeal driven
Like blazing comets through the troubled sky.
'Tis done; what centuries had rear'd
In quick explosion disappear'd,
Nor even its ruins met my wond'ring eye.

X.

But in their place,—
Bright with more than human grace,
Rob'd in more than mortal seeming,
Radiant glory in her face,
And eyes with heaven's own brightness beaming;
Rose a fair majestic form,
As the mild rainbow from the storm.
I mark'd her smile, I knew her eye;
And when, with gesture of command,
She waved aloft the cap-crown'd wand,
My slumbers fled mid shouts of 'LIBERTY!'

XI.

Read ye the dream? and know ye not
How truly it unlock'd the word of fate?
Went not the flame from this illustrious spot,
And spreads it not and burns in every state?

And when their old and cumbrous walls,
Fill'd with this spirit, glow intense,
Vainly they rear their impotent defence,—
The fabric falls!
That fervent energy must spread,
Till Despotism's Towers be overthrown;
And in their stead,
Liberty stands alone!

XII.

Hasten the day, just Heaven!
Accomplish thy design;
And let the blessings thou hast freely given,
Freely on all men shine;
Till equal rights be equally enjoy'd,
And human power for human good employ'd;
Till Law, not man, the sovereign rule sustain,
And Peace and Virtue undisputed reign.

XIII.

Again I slept; and where that maid had been,
Another Temple rose upon the scene.
And oh, what human words can render,
Fitting tribute to the grace,
And the more than earthly splendor,
Of that bright and matchless place!
From thousand columns sprung the ample Dome,
Of heaven's own form and heaven's own brilliancy;
It seem'd some glorious spirit's favorite home,
Breathing of love and pure tranquillity.

No proud defiance frowning there,
Look'd threat and insult on the gloomy air,
But quiet dignity in conscious strength reposed.
No arms, no guards, no dungeons deep and closed;
But open, free—like God's free day,
That shines and smiles on all with heaven descended ray.

XIV.

Delighted and entranced,
I eagerly advanced
To enter and explore the glories there confined.
But suddenly, with tuneful stroke,
From the lofty dome a loud peal broke,
Flinging soft silver tones upon the wind.
With strong melodious swell,
Rung forth a magic chime, that fell
Like midnight music on the sleeper's ear,
Making it paradise to sleep and hear.

XV.

That strange mysterious sound,
Soft as the mellow horn's most gentle note,
Seem'd lightly on the buoyant winds to float,
And spread through all the world around.
O'er the mountain and the plain,
Beyond the desert and the main,
Wherever man is found,
Went forth that winning sound,
And breathed its summons in his raptured ear.
The tone went home to every heart;
It bade the thrilling tears of Freedom start,
And ransom'd nations in her halls appear.

XVI.

My eager eyes I upward threw,
The wondrous instrument to view,
In which such piercing power and ravishing sweetness met;
And on its splendid form, behold,
Inscribed in living light and gold,
That all mankind might read—thy honored name, FAYETTE!

XVII.

O for a tongue of fire, to tell
How gloriously the vision was fulfill'd!
How at the touch of Liberty's sweet bell
The hearts of countless myriads have thrill'd,
And Destiny her brightest page unfurl'd,
Roused by the spirit that had waked the world.

XVIII.

Even Europe loves the sweet and stirring note;
Southern Columbia rises at the call,
With kindling eye, and tyrant scorning tread;
And Greece calls back the spirits of her dead,
And bids her ancient banners float
Where Freedom's martyrs fell, and proudly still shall fall.

XIX.

Oh Greece, reviving Greece! thy name
Kindles the scholar's and the patriot's flame.
On thee our anxious eyes we bend.
For thee our earnest prayers ascend,

That never may thy lifted banner fall.
For thee, thine own strong eloquence
Pleads in Columbia's Legislative Hall.
And is there none to *arm* in thy defence?
No ardent, generous, devoted youth,
To pledge his fortunes and his truth,
And, nobly exil'd, cross the wave,
To join the oppress'd, and aid the brave?

XX.

Go forth, if such there be, go forth;
Stand by that nation in her second birth.
Coupled with her high cause, thy name,
Like his, whose welcome presence draws
A nation's rapturous applause,
Shall ring through earth from sea to sea,
The favorite watchword of the free,
The purest shout of fame.
And when Time's slow and favoring hand,
Restores the glories of that lovely land,
Thither, perchance, thy pilgrimage thou 'lt take;
And while earth's older Empires shake,
Receive the welcome of the New;
Which round thy steps in grateful shouts shall break,
Than those which follow kings—how heartier and more true!

JAN 27 1933